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Great truths in little words

Henry Augustus
Rawes

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GREAT TRUTHS IN LITTLE
WORDS.

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GREAT TRUTHS IN LITTLE WORDS.

BY THE
REV. FATHER RAWES, O.S.C.

Third Edition.



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I dedicate this

 Book,

written for the love of Jesus, our Lord,

to

England's Great Saint, St Cuthbert of Durham;

and to

St John of Beverley,

and

St Bede of Jarrow.

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GREAT TRUTHS IN LITTLE WORDS.

WHY DID GOD MAKE YOU?

IT is impossible to ask any one a question more important than this. Love follows knowledge: until we know about anything, we cannot desire it; and, until we know a law, we cannot keep it. Now you may be quite sure that God did not send you into this world without a purpose. He never does anything without a purpose, most wise and most just. He had a divine intention about you in your creation. All things in His creation, even such things as the stones, the trees, the rivers, and the hills, were made for one certain end or purpose. How wisely and wonderfully they are made, you will feel the more, the more that you understand them. Again, His living but irrational creatures were made for an end known to Him. Most of all,

A

He has thus made for some end those creatures which have the use of reason, that is, the human beings who live, toil, and suffer in this world, and the radiant angels, strong and wise and beautiful, who always stand in His presence, and always see His face.

Passing by all other creatures, let us try to understand why God has made us. Nothing can be of greater consequence to us than to understand this rightly. In fact, upon this it will chiefly depend whether we gain or miss the end for which we have been made.

Now, I will first tell you some of the ends for which you were not made. This may seem a roundabout way of getting at the truth ; but so we shall be able to see our true end more clearly by the contrast. The dawn never seems so lovely, as when we have watched it coming up from the darkness of the night.

I. First, God did not make you for yourself. Could any one find rest in himself ? Could any one be satisfied to all eternity with the contemplation of himself ? If so, he certainly would be satisfied with very little. Yet some people seem to make themselves the very centre of their lives. They have no eyes and no ears for anything but

that which concerns themselves. They live as if their own little circle were the great universe of God. We may often even see persons, naturally kind-hearted, become actually merciless to their fellow-creatures, because they think only of themselves. But nothing is more contrary to the love of God than every kind of self-seeking. I may truly say that every form of sin is some manifestation of the love of self. Whatever we do, we should try to get rid of this spirit of selfishness. If we do not, we shall live as if God had made us for ourselves.

II. Next, God did not make you for other creatures. As we were not created for ourselves, so neither were we created for those who are like ourselves. We can all see at once, if we think of it, how absurd it would be to say that we can find a long and unchanging satisfaction in any creatures, however desirable they may be. A satisfaction, short and worthless, we may find, but nothing more ; nothing that will fill the deep longing of souls that were made for God, who is eternal and uncreated. No creatures can be sufficient for us, now or hereafter. “Deep calleth on deep.”

III. This is true of creatures, but it is true

even in a deeper and fuller sense of that power which we call the world. I do not stop now to inquire what that power is. It is quite enough for us to know that God did not create us for it, and that it is always at enmity with Him. The love of the world drives out of the heart the love of God. St John says: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him."

IV. Yet again: there is a great enemy of God: there is that Wicked One, whose whole being, in all its powers, is set up against God and against His kingdom. The devil goes about "like a roaring lion," devouring by thousands the souls that choose to give themselves up into his power; but we were not made for him. If we were not made for ourselves, nor for creatures, nor for the world, still less were we made for the service of the devil. He is altogether evil, and man at the beginning was "very good;" and will, one day, be "very good" again, in the new paradise, more beautiful than the old, in the new city of God, more glorious than the first.

For what, then, were we made? The simple

answer is, for God ; not for creatures, the highest and noblest and purest and most beautiful, much less for creatures vile and dark and detestable ; but for God, eternal and uncreated, the Beginning and End of all good. Nothing more blessed than this can be imagined even by saints and angels. Mary herself knows of nothing sweeter ; even God, in His Trinity of Persons, can set before us nothing higher, or more beautiful, or more glorious than Himself. Yet the world forgets Him ; and even they forget Him who ought to remember Him most.

Think, then, always of this great truth, that God made you for Himself. No one can have too clear and strong a knowledge of this. Let it "be as a sign in thy hand, and as a frontlet between thy eyes, for a remembrance ; because the Lord hath brought us forth out of Egypt, by a strong hand." To know it and act upon it, or to know it dreamily and sleepily, is the difference between eternal life and eternal death. As the world closes you in, as its noises deafen you, and as its attractions draw you, try to remember always for what you have been made. You are made to serve God for ever ; to see His face ; and to have His name in your foreheads. With

less than this you could never be satisfied, and more you cannot have. However little you may have of the goods of this world, as to learning or riches or high places, and such things as these, you can have that which is far better: for you can have God, in Whom are all things, and out of Whom is nothing. And it is your highest blessedness, as it is your bounden duty, to love Him with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Let each one of us, then, say often to himself, I am made for God. This will raise, purify, ennable, glorify our lives, which else must be dark and unprofitable; and will bring us at last to the great Kingdom, where God liveth and reigneth for ever.

WHITHER ARE YOU GOING ?

IT is certain that, in a very short time, we must go away from this world, and our place will not know us any more. When the hour comes we must leave all that we have, and go forth alone, as far as men are concerned, through the cold river and the Valley of the Shadow of Death. None of those on whom we depend here will be able to help us there ; and there no man, but the one Divine Man, can help us ; no brother, but the one Divine Brother, can redeem us.

The hour of departure from this world will come to all, and it will come to each one. "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment." We know well that no one can escape.

You, who now read these words, are a wayfarer on the road that leads either forward to God, or backward to that darkness in which He is not seen nor known. Step by step, you are daily

advancing either upward or downward. If we could know you as God knows you, we should see your heart either becoming brighter and purer, as more and more of the light of the Eternal Kingdom falls upon you : or becoming blacker and fouler, as you draw nearer and nearer to that darkness in which there is no light, and in which there can be no light for ever. By this darkness you are more and more separated from God, and more and more lost in that frightful abyss of horror and desolation which is called the second death.

You are on the road ; you are moving on, and you cannot stand still ; you must go on in one direction or the other, whether you like it or not. I ask you, therefore, very solemnly and earnestly, Whither are you going ?

Before you answer this question, call to mind the life and death which are set before you, and before us all.

I. There is Heaven waiting for all of those who persevere to the end, and so are saved. There are the myriad joys of the unseen Kingdom of God, and all the brightness of the Golden City, waiting for us, if we are faithful to the end. “Eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard,

nor hath it entered into the heart of man to imagine the joys that God has prepared for those who love Him." They who are there, having been "called, elect, and faithful," are in the fellowship of the Holy Angels, who stood in the day of their great trial, and in the fellowship also of the Saints, who have been redeemed from the evil world. Evermore, like the sound of a water-flood, goes up the praise of the Elect ; and never ceases the fragrant incense from St Michael's thurible, as he worships in his gleaming raiment, by the Altar and the Throne. They stand ever with their upturned faces in the light of Mary's crown, and in the midst of the love of Mary's sinless Heart, the great trophy of redeeming grace, the one only Star that shines there in its unfallen brightness. Then, also, in a love and blessedness far higher even than this, they see the Divine and Human Face of Jesus. Their eyes behold the King in His Beauty. They are with Him in the Land that once was so very far off. They walk with Him in white, for they are worthy, and follow Him whithersoever He goeth, by the River of the Water of Life, amongst the Lilies of Paradise, over the Mountains of the Spiritual

Israel. Higher yet than this, like strong eagles in their flight, they see God ; they look upon Him "as He is," and see Him face to face. They enjoy the Beatific Vision, the Vision of the ever Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in Their uncreated Majesty, in Their uncreated Wisdom, in Their uncreated Love.

II. There is Hell waiting for those who do not persevere to the end, and so are lost. No pen nor tongue can set forth the exceeding misery of their doom. The very thought of that unbearable woe fills our hearts with trembling, and our souls with a nameless dread. No eye, but the eye of God, can scan the agony of their deserved punishment. A most fearful sound of wailing goes up from that furnace in which they are, and from the unknown depths of that bottomless pit, to which they have been condemned. I know of no words of the Holy Scriptures stronger, more forcible, more terrific, than those which describe the agony of all who are eternally punished in the sight of God, and by His most just judgment. "The smoke of their torments goes up for ever and ever." They "are tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the Holy Angels, and in the

sight of the Lamb." They are with Satan and his evil Angels, who were cast down from Heaven; they are amongst those apostates from God and His Kingdom, who are lost for ever; they are in the fire that never can be quenched. The darkness that is round them is such, that they cannot see; God is hidden from their eyes; they will never be able to see Him. That is the outer darkness of which Isaias says, "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched."

The end of our road, if we go upward, is God; but, if we go downward, it is the darkness in which God cannot be.

Is it possible that any one, thinking of these things, can halt between two sides? Is it possible that any one can hesitate in his choice between light and darkness? Is it possible that any soul can know that one road leads straight to God, and that the other leads straight from Him, and yet walk in the way that takes men headlong down to destruction? Yet it is certain that tens of thousands live without God and Christ in the world. So to live, is to be spiritually dead; so to live, is to go self-condemned into the judgment; so to live, is to be

cast out for ever into the darkness at the coming of the Son of Man. “ He that hath not the Son, hath not life.”

Oh that every one would remember this ; and ask himself, night and morning, on his knees, whither he is going, and what is likely to be his end ?

MORTAL SIN.

THE Kingdom of Grace is the city of God, which is set amidst the darkness : and the Kingdom of Glory is the city of God, which is set above the darkness for evermore. In a very true sense these two cities of God are one : and both are Jerusalem, the city of His love ; both are the abode of His Angels, His Saints, His servants ; both are flooded and filled with the brightness of His throne.

Blessed are they who keep His commandments, and do His will : blessed are they, who always, in purity and innocence of heart, tread the courts of His house, with His Saints and Angels.

From this Vision of Peace, from this radiant glory of the New Jerusalem, in this world and the world unseen, I have to turn to the appalling darkness of mortal sin ; to Babylon, the city of confusion ; to the land of the

Chanaanite, and the Egyptian darkness that can be felt.

But God is good, and His counsels are just. No soul need fall from Him unless it chooses to do so. No soul need pass from the kingdom of Jesus to the anarchy of Satan, unless, wilfully and deliberately, it chooses the evil, and puts away the good : “A net is spread in vain before the eyes of them that have wings.”

It is quite true that no words can express the utter desolation of souls that are lost in mortal sin. For them the sun shines not ; and the flowers grow not ; and the rain falls not. They listen neither to the voice of creation, nor the whispers of grace : spring and summer, autumn and winter, come and go, but these souls hear not their message. What is far worse, Advent, and Lent, Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, pass by unheeded : they are clothed in their darkness, wrapt in their grave-clothes, fettered with chains far stronger than steel. Jerusalem does not know them ; the city of the Saints does not acknowledge them ; they are outcasts from the great commonwealth of the spiritual Israel ; and are without God and without Christ in the world. They can find no rest from the tempest and the

troubled sea, no home of refuge, no ark to carry them safely on the stormy waters. They are like birds far away from land, flying, and flying in vain, between the dark stormy sky, and a far darker, far stormier, sea. They are “clouds without water, that are carried about by winds, trees of the autumn, unfruitful, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own confusion, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the storm of darkness for ever.”

Now all actual sin is the free transgression of any Divine Law which binds us in conscience. In other words, sin is any thought, word, or deed, contrary to the eternal Law of God. Original sin is a different thing altogether, and is not contained in our present subject. There are sins of commission and sins of omission ; sins against God, against our neighbour, against ourselves; sins against justice, or prudence, or temperance, or fortitude ; sins against faith, or hope, or charity ; sins of malice, or ignorance, or infirmity ; there are actual sin, and habitual sin, and venial sin, and mortal sin.

It is of mortal sin that we are now thinking. This kind of sin is any grave transgression of the

Divine Law, which separates the soul from the friendship of God, and makes it liable to the penalty of eternal death. The difference between mortal and venial sin is this : he who commits a mortal sin turns away altogether from God, and altogether to the creature; and, as it were, rests in the creature as the end for which he was created. This, in the strictest sense of the words, is giving to creatures “the glory of the incorruptible God ;” and we know that God is a jealous God, and that He says of Himself : “I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven things.” On the other hand, he who commits a venial sin does not turn altogether from God to creatures ; but this kind of sin we will pass by for the present.

Three things are required for mortal sin ; first, matter either grave in itself, or grave because of the circumstances ; next, a full consciousness of the malice of the action ; and lastly, the full consent of the will. It would be altogether contrary to the Divine Goodness, to condemn any one to eternal punishment for a light fault ; or for a fault of which he was not thoroughly conscious ; or for a fault to which he did not give full consent.

But, when any one does commit a mortal sin, how terrible a thing it is: "My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living water, and they have made to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water;" "The sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing in the mire;" "The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest, and whose waters cast up dirt and mire;" "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God;" "They are fountains without water and clouds tost with whirlwinds, to whom the blackness of darkness is reserved." Unless such a one, before he leaves this world, reconcile himself to God in the Sacrament of Penance, and there wash his soul in the blood of Jesus Christ, he must take his part with those of whom it is said, "They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy Angels, and in the sight of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever: neither have they rest, day nor night, who have adored the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the character of his name."

These terrible words are the words of the Holy Ghost. We can add nothing to

them ; and from them we can take nothing away.

VENIAL SIN.

Venial sin does not destroy in us the grace of God ; but it weakens His love in our souls. It is the transgression of some law, which does not bind us under pain of mortal sin : or the transgression of other laws, with a consent imperfectly free or imperfectly voluntary. Besides, every venial sin lays upon us a penalty, greater or smaller, according to its nature ; and for it we shall have to undergo much suffering in Purgatory, where all debts, due to the justice of God, must be paid to the very last farthing.

Now, no number of venial sins can grow into a mortal sin ; that is, if you simply consider them as added together ; because all venial sins are of a different kind from mortal sins. Still they are very dangerous ; and by every means to be avoided, as you will see, if you consider the matter carefully.

I. If you should strive to avoid mortal sins, but should make up your mind not to be watchful against venial sins, you would, by that very resolution, commit a mortal sin, if the venial sins,

which you do not endeavour to avoid, are a proximate and probable disposition to what are mortal. That surely is a terrible thing ; and such it must appear to us, if we rightly lay it to heart. And see how very contemptible such a resolution is. God is so good that no words can describe His goodness ; these sins displease Him, and make Him turn away His Face from us ; and yet we do not hesitate to commit them, because they do not bring down on our heads the last and most fearful punishment of all. This is a height and depth of ingratitude which may well make us afraid. Then, again, think of this ; our Divine Master died for us on Calvary ; all our sins were heaped upon Him. They were gathered up in the scourges that tore His Back, and were hidden in the sharp thorns that pierced His Sacred Brow. They deepened the agony in the Garden, and smote Him, and crushed Him, and trampled on Him, as He fell beneath His Cross, and as He hung upon it, crucified : and we—we for whom all this agony of pain was suffered—in our ingratitude, and our meanness, and our cowardice, forget these things ; forget the lavishness of His Passion and the divine generosity of His Sacred Heart ; and sin against

Him, and scourge Him, and crown Him with thorns, over and over again, because we think, as I said just now, that there will not come upon us the last fearful penalty of all. In all this I am speaking of an affection to venial sin ; of a deliberate intention to commit such sins. I am not speaking of sins of infirmity or surprise ; "For a just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again." About such sins as these our Lord is very compassionate, and makes every allowance ; far more than we could expect, if we did not know what He is. He makes, indeed, more than every allowance for those who try to walk in His grace.

II. Remember what the Sacred Scriptures say : "He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little." Every sin, however small it may be, weakens divine grace in your soul ; blurs the image of God in which you were created ; and dims your spiritual insight. These sins are like the mist, creeping over the hills, hiding first one peak and then another, one valley and then another, one tree and then another, till all things become invisible, and are hidden in the darkness. So the thick mist of sin creeps over the soul, little by little, hiding one virtue and then

another, one grace and then another, one holy desire and then another, till the poor darkened soul is shut out from the light of the city of God.

III. There are some words of Jesus which may be well applied to those who have, or, still more, who cherish an affection to venial sin : I mean what He says in the Apocalypse to the Church of Laodicea. Here are His words : " These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, who is the beginning of the creation of God : I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert either cold or hot ; but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee forth out of My mouth." It would be difficult to find words more terrible than these. If we are neither hot nor cold, He will begin to put us away from Himself. We shall have less light, weaker warnings, fewer graces. It will be only what we deserve ; what we have brought on ourselves. His just judgments will take effect on us. As we do not draw nigh to Him, He will not draw nigh to us. As we turn away from Him, He will sorrowfully let us go. He stands before us pleading and entreating, but we

refuse to listen. We wilfully displease Him, through softness and sloth and cowardice. And so the look of sorrow deepens on the Face of the Good Shepherd, that Face so venerable and so beautiful, as He sees the hardness of our hearts ; and knows, as no one but Himself can know, what will be the terrible end. Do you not hear Him calling you from all venial sins ? Do you not feel His thrilling Voice as He says, “ I would that thou wert either hot or cold.” Thou “ knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

I am quite sure that you will try to keep from venial sin, when you remember that all venial sins were in the Crown of Thorns, and that they wound and grieve the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

THE SEVEN CHIEF SINS.

What I have to say about these sins, as to their nature, I am going to copy down, in the main, from a book of moral theology.

They are called the chief sins, because they are heads and fountains from which other sins flow. So that, in strictness, you ought rather to call them vices than sins. These seven chief

sins are, pride, avarice, luxury, envy, anger, sloth, gluttony.

I. Pride is any excessive love of some goodness or excellence which we have in ourselves.

The sins which spring from pride are, ambition, vain-glory, presumption, boastfulness, love of show, and hypocrisy.

If you wish to overcome these sins, think first of your own weakness and nothingness. God is everything, and the creature is nothing. All that we have of good is His: all that we have of evil is our own. No one but a fool could take pride in the gifts of God, as if they were something belonging to himself. And the glory of this world passes away: “All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen, because the Spirit of the Lord hath blown upon it. Indeed the people is grass. The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen; but the word of our Lord endureth for ever.” And again: “Thou, in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hand. They shall perish, but Thou shalt continue. They all shall grow old as a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou

change them, and they shall be changed ; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." So, also, think of the great humility of Christ. He is God over all, blessed for evermore, but He has become Man for our sakes. From the inaccessible glory He has come into this darkness. " Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the Cross."

If you think of these things, as you ought to think of them, you will not sin against God by pride.

II. Avarice is an unlawful desire for temporal goods. As pride is opposed to humility, avarice is opposed to justice and liberality. Avarice opposed to justice is much more dangerous than avarice opposed to liberality : but both are very dangerous.

The sins springing from avarice are, hardness of heart towards the wretched, restlessness and disquiet of mind, too much thought for the

morrow, too much anxiety about earthly things, treachery, craft, and such sins as these. There is no greater safeguard against this vice than the words of our Divine Master: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven; where neither rust nor moth doth consume: and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

III. Luxury is all sin against purity of heart, and is contrary to temperance. From it come blindness of mind, thoughtlessness, inconstancy, fickleness of purpose, and even hatred of God. To keep from this sin you must be frequent in prayer: "Pray without ceasing." Prayer is the mightiest of all weapons against the strongholds of Satan. Guard your senses, carefully and humbly: keep a strict watch on your thoughts and eyes. Avoid sloth, for sloth always drags us downward with a heavy hand; and fly, with all your power, from the occasions of sin. Mortify your rebellious bodies, remembering the words of St Paul. That favoured servant of God had been caught up into the third

Heaven, seeing there sights that he could not describe, and hearing there sounds that he could not tell : yet even he said ; “ I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty : I so fight, not as one beating the air ; but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection ; lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.” Above all, frequent the Sacraments : you will always find the Precious Blood of Jesus in the Sacrament of Penance ; and He Himself, God and man, is always loving you, and waiting for you on the Altar.

IV. Envy is a very dreadful sin. It is sorrow at the good which comes to another, or joy at another’s evil. From this sin spring whisperings, contempt, detraction, and calumny. But, as a safeguard against it, we should remember that we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves. Think of St John’s words : “ We know that we have passed from death to life, if we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer : and you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself. In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us ; and we ought to

lay down our lives for the brethren." "This is His commandment, that we should believe in the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He hath given us commandment." "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, Whom he seeth not. And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother."

V. Anger is, as it were, a flaming up of the mind, and an unlawful resentment against any person or thing ; or, otherwise, it is an unlawful desire of revenge. If it be a desire of revenge, it is mortal in its own nature ; but any kind of anger is dangerous. It produces such sins as indignation beyond what is right, bad feelings against our neighbours, unjust resentments, unforgiving tempers, reproaches, abuse, blasphemies.

Our great safeguard against it is to think of the meekness, and gentleness, and patience of Christ ; and how we always deserve far more punishment, of every kind, than we receive. Of the patience of Christ Jesus our Lord, Isaias says : "He was offered, because it was His own

will, and He opened not His mouth : He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and He shall not open His mouth." And St Peter, the first of His Vicars, says of Him : "When He was reviled, He did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not ; but gave Himself up to him that judged Him unjustly." So we shall overcome the evil, with the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

VI. Sloth, in one sense, is simply laziness ; but, more accurately, it is that carelessness of the intellect, and that weakness of the will, from which comes a dislike of spiritual things. And if the sloth be so great, that through it we omit duties to which we are bound with a sufficient obligation, then it is a mortal sin. If we give way to sloth, we shall suffer from great tepidity of spirit, from wandering thoughts, from dislike of prayer, and from weariness in all that has to do with God. But if we take the right means we can overcome it. Let us set before our minds the unspeakable rewards of Heaven, and the terrible punishments of the lost ; and, with prayer to the Holy Ghost, let us try to see into these things. Above all, think of the labours of our

Lord Jesus Christ—all His suffering, all His agony, all the anguish of His Heart; how for our sakes He bore “the burden of the day and the heat.”

VII. Gluttony is an immoderate indulgence in food or drink; or an immoderate desire for them. There are chiefly five ways in which you can commit the sin of gluttony: if you eat before your proper time; if you are too delicate and particular about your food; if you eat too much, or greedily, or take too much thought about what you have to eat. From this sin spring drunkenness, dulness of mind, deadness of soul, boasting, babbling, insolence, immodest words, and impurity of every kind.

As a remedy against this sin, think of the time when you must die; of the time, also, when you must lie down amongst the worms in your grave, and return to the dust from whence you came.

Thus I have set before you something about sin, whether it separates us utterly from God, or only weakens His grace in our souls. With all our strength we ought to avoid sin of every kind, for it was sin which nailed Jesus to His Cross. There have been Saints who have

trembled, and almost fainted at the very name of sin ; so great was their love for God. And we, according to our light and grace, can hate all sin, and detest it, and keep ourselves from it. St John says, " He that committeth sin is of the devil : for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whatsoever is born of God committeth not sin." " This is the testimony that God hath given to us eternal life. And this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son hath not life." " All iniquity is sin. And there is a sin unto death."

PROTESTANTISM.

PROTESTANTISM is the dethroning of Jesus, and the denial of the Revelation of God. It is the rising up of the human will against the Divine Will; and it is caused by the pride of man's natural heart rebelling against the humbling doctrines of the Gospel.

For the Gospel of Jesus Christ is very humbling to the pride of man. God, in His great love, is always ready to save us from endless death: but it must be in His own way, and not in ours. If in humility we go along the way that He has made for us, we shall be saved. But if in self-will we choose our own way, we shall be lost. There is now only one Way of Salvation. There is only one place in which we can know the Revelation of God, "as the truth is in Jesus." That place is the Roman Church of God, in which the Seven Sacraments of the Gospel are ministered, and over which the Vicar

of Jesus Christ reigns. In it only is to be found "the Faith once delivered to the Saints." In it "no Prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation." "The holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost;" and their words can only be interpreted by the Church, inspired and guided by the same Holy Ghost, always dwelling in her, and always giving her light. This Church, being One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman, is "the House of God," "the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth." It is only in this Catholic Church that men truly can know "Christ Jesus, Who, from God, is made unto us Wisdom and Justice and Sanctification and Redemption." It is in the Roman Church, and only in the Roman Church, that Christ is preached fully and faithfully, and that His everlasting Gospel is carried to the souls of men.

This Church is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone." And "other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus." Being built on all the Apostles and Prophets, it is in a special way

built upon St Peter: according to our Lord's own words, "I say to thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock, I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Between this Church and all forms of unbelief or misbelief, there is the same difference as between light and darkness. God is true ; He can neither deceive nor be deceived. His Church, like Him, is true, and can neither deceive nor be deceived. The head of the faithful, the Vicar of Christ, when teaching the Church, as the successor of Peter, can never, by any possibility, go wrong. It is simply impossible for him to believe or to teach error on any question of faith, or morals, or dogmatic facts, when he addresses the universal Church as her divinely-appointed and infallible teacher. On one side is the Church of the Living God. They who form that Church are "as living stones built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is said in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Sion, a chief corner-stone, elect, precious ; and he that shall believe in Him shall not be confounded." On

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the other side are societies, set up by man, always changing, always without true life, always hastening to their predestined doom, hurrying back to the darkness from which they came. In them are those who either believe wrongly or do not believe at all. "The chief Corner-stone" is "a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal, to them who stumble at the word, neither do believe." So that looking on one side and on the other, St Peter says to the faithful, the true believers: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may declare His virtues, Who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." Now it is just as certain, as that God is everywhere, that this light, being the Revelation which He has given of Himself and His Will by His Church, is to be found nowhere, in its perfection, except in the Church which is built on St Peter and ruled by the Holy See. And this Catholic Church, which our Lord built on Himself, the chief Corner-stone, and on Peter, the Rock, whom He chose, keeps always in its entireness the sacred Deposit of the Faith. She can neither add one doctrine to it, nor take away one from it. What St

John says of the Apocalypse, we may say also of the whole Faith : “ If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy City.”

From time to time, to meet particular forms of heresy or unbelief, the Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, defines doctrines which were not defined before. But these doctrines are old doctrines, contained in the Revelation which God gave at the beginning. The Church only knows that to be of Faith which God has revealed, and can only define that which she knows. She can forget nothing, and can invent nothing ; but is the keeper and interpreter of the Revelation of God. Thus at different times in the history of the Church, precise and accurate definitions have been made. They have been made, for example, on such subjects as these : the Holy Trinity, the Eternal Generation of the Son, the Eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost, the Incarnation of the Word, our Lord’s Divine Personality, the Blessed Sacrament, the doctrines about Grace and man’s freewill, the

dignity and office of Mary, her Immaculate Conception, and the Infallibility of the Holy See. But no new doctrine has ever been invented. In the future, many things may be defined which are not defined as yet; but nothing ever has been, ever will be, ever can be, made of faith, except those doctrines which Jesus revealed to His Church. Every definition, through all the lapse of years, has been made by the guidance of the unchangeable Spirit Who dwells in the Church, as His Temple. The Catholic Church cannot change, and cannot teach anything which is not perfectly right and true. The Holy Ghost speaks by the voice of the successor of Peter, and Catholics everywhere, and at all times, believe him with the certainty of faith.

But all sects of professing Christians change constantly in their teaching, because being of man and from man, and not from God, they have no divine guide, and therefore no power of deciding with certainty between that which is false and that which is true. At this moment you look out from the Roman Church, the Ark of Salvation, upon the error-stricken sects around you, and you see them sometimes struggling with

the dark waters of the flood, and sometimes sinking beneath its stormy waves. They are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.” These are the words of St Paul about those who do not “hold the form of sound words;” and who do not “keep the good thing committed” to the Church. That “good thing” is the faith which has been committed to our “trust by the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us.”

Now the first rebellion of which we know, against the Revelation and authority of God, was the rebellion of Lucifer and the angels who fell with him. The will of God was revealed to them ; they refused to obey, and were cast out. One moment they were bright, gleaming, faithful, in the flush of the Eternal Morning ; and the next moment they were dark, faithless, hopeless, reprobate, hurled from the battlements of Heaven, driven headlong into the darkness and the chains.

That, which happened among the angels, has happened among men from the beginning of the world. Under the law of nature, and under the law of Moses, they were always forsaking

the Faith which then was revealed. They were led astray by pride and self-love and self-will. Thus Cain's sacrifice was rejected. Thus Core, Dathan, and Abiram, rebelled against the authority which God had established in His Church. Thus also Balaam, the false prophet, led the Israelites into sin. And very terribly they were all punished. Cain, branded by Divine vengeance as the murderer of his brother, became a fugitive on the earth. As to Core and his rebels, as soon as Moses had finished speaking, "the earth broke asunder under their feet, and opening her mouth devoured them, with their tents and all their substance. And they went down alive into hell, the ground closing upon them, and they perished from among the people." And Balaam perished miserably by the sword.

In the same way, men have ever been rebelling against the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if they have not always been so signally and visibly punished as the heretics and rebels, of whom I have spoken, it is because we now are living under the law of Christ, the law of spiritual freedom; and not under a dispensation of temporal punishments and rewards. But

their judgment and their punishment will surely come, swift and strong and piercing, as the arrows of Divine vengeance.

This rebellion actually began in the time of the Apostles. St Paul says, "The mystery of iniquity already worketh." Cerinthus, a great teacher of error, was confronted and denounced by "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Then there came such men as Arius, Macedonius, Sabellius, Eutyches, and Nestorius. Then followed, long after, great leaders of spiritual rebellion, such as Luther, Calvin, Henry the VIII., Elizabeth, and Knox. These were worse than Cain, or Core, or Dathan, or Balaam; for they rebelled in greater light, and against a more glorious Revelation. They sinned against greater knowledge, in the unchangeable Church of Pentecost; and so they deserve a more terrible doom. They are like him of whom the Prophet says: "In the land of the Holy Ones he committed his sin, and he shall not see the glory of God." In the terrible pride of their hearts they forsook the Faith, the Truth which Jesus revealed. They despised also the word of the Apostles, St Paul and St Jude: "Brethren, stand fast: and hold the traditions you have

learnt, whether by word or by our epistle." "I was under a necessity to write to you: to beseech you to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints." They who rebel against the Catholic Church rebel against God. They who deny the Faith, or refuse to believe it, reject Christ; and they, who persecute the Holy Father, persecute Christ. "Woe unto them," says St Jude, "for they have gone in the way of Cain; and after the error of Balaam, they have for reward poured out themselves; and have perished in the contradiction of Core."

What a difference, then, there is between the one Church, majestic and unchangeable ; and the Protestant sects, feeble and ever-changing, which have set themselves up against her. The Church comes to us from God, knowing with certainty His Truth; teaching it in all its purity to her children, and to the nations, if they will listen; doing perfectly the work that has been entrusted to her. But Protestantism is nothing, except by its antagonism to the truth. Its whole life, such as it is, is in its denials. It has no great truths to assert, no message from God to deliver to men. It rebels against the Church

of Jesus Christ, protests against her doctrine, fights against her prerogatives: that is all. It is “of the earth, earthly.” We can tell its origin and whence it comes. We can put our fingers on its heresiarchs, and say when they rose, and what errors they taught. We know the caves and holes of the earth from which came the teachers of heresy, the devourers of souls. We see it now, as it has ever been, without any certain doctrines, without laws, without a true system of morals, without a creed. If those, who are thus benighted and deluded, choose to be enlightened ; if in humility they will come to learn from the Eternal Spirit, dwelling in His Church ; then they “shall know of the doctrine” that it comes from God, and that we do not speak it of ourselves. But if they are obstinate and perverse, the loss will be theirs ; and one day “they shall know that there hath been a Prophet in the midst of them.” One day, even if it be not till the last day, the brightness of the Roman Church of God will be forced upon their knowledge ; and they will know, when it is too late, how they might have been redeemed and saved. At any rate, our mission is to preach the Gospel : “Let the dead bury their

dead: but go thou, and preach the Kingdom of God."

For the one work of the Catholic Church is to preach Jesus and His Cross; to make Him known and loved; to lift Him up before the souls of men, as the Lamb slain, "Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins, in His own Blood." The Good Shepherd, the Saviour of sinners, is the burden of every voice of the Church, as she cries aloud in the wilderness. And like Him, her Divine Head, the second Adam, she is from Heaven. She is unchangeable and true, because God is unchangeable and true. Strong, beautiful, and pure, infallible and indefectible, she is a City set on a hill, and her light cannot be hidden. All the nations, if they please, may walk in the brightness of this City. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world is seated in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us understanding that we may know the true God, and may be in His true Son." "They are of the world; therefore of the world they speak, and the world heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us. He that is not of God, heareth us not. By this we

know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

There are many tests by which we may try this anti-christian spirit of the sects, and see that it is not of God.

I. St Paul teaches us that the great day will not come, till there come "a revolt first." The words in the Greek are very expressive : he calls it "the revolt;" as if it were greater and more terrible than all others, and so distinguished from them. There have been many revolts, many apostasies from the beginning : but the greatest and most immoral and most daring and most lawless rebellion against the Church of Jesus Christ is Protestantism. It is also by far the most illogical ; far more than all others it is contrary to that reason, which God has implanted in us, and by which we are made like Him.

That Church had been teaching the truth of God, and doing the work of God, for 1500 years ; and then Protestantism rose up against her. No corruption of doctrine could ever come near her ; and when moral or ecclesiastical or social corruptions crept in through the frailty of men, she herself was always ready to put them down with a strong, divinely-guided hand ; was always ready

to set her house in order, and to cleanse the Sanctuary. For long centuries there had been a divine order established in the world ; and at last Protestantism, loving the darkness and unable to bear the light, rose up self-willed, impetuous, fierce ; and rebelled against it. Then there broke over our own land a great deluge of sin and sorrow, miscalled the Reformation ; and, for a little while, it seemed as if the landmarks of the ancient Church were swept away for ever ; and as if God had forgotten to be gracious.

II. Protestantism is not an open enemy of our Lord, like infidelity ; but, like Judas, it betrays the Son of Man with a kiss. It believes in part of the Bible, and professes to be guided by an infallible book ; but does not choose to see, what is self-evident, that an infallible book is simply useless, without an infallible interpreter, to teach its right meaning. For the book cannot speak and declare what it means. When the meaning therefore is doubtful, who is to explain it ? That it often is doubtful is proved by facts : for the sects hold numbers of contradictory opinions, professing to get these opinions not only from the same book, but often from the same passages in it. Now the true doctrine is

one because God is one. There can no more be two true doctrines about the same thing, than there can be two Gods. Each sect has its own psalm, its own doctrine, its own interpretation ; and this is simply confusion. But the Catholic Church, enlightened as she is by the Spirit of God, has only one doctrine, always clear, always true, always unchangeable.

Protestantism also rejects many books of the inspired Scriptures, and calls them the Apocrypha, because they teach doctrines which it does not like. Again, it fixes on isolated texts of Scripture, which sometimes perhaps seem at first sight to favour it : it neglects the context, neglects also other passages, by which these are limited or explained ; and so they who are thus deluded, being “unlearned and unstable,” wrest these words “as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.” Thus Protestants hold the soul-destroying doctrine of justification by faith only ; a doctrine, not only not taught, but actually denied in the Bible.

(I.) We are justified freely and by the grace of God : for of ourselves we have nothing, and can do nothing. Our Lord says so : “Without Me ye can do nothing.”

(2.) We are also justified by faith, because, as the Church teaches, faith is the root of our justification, and "without faith it is impossible to please God." But this faith is not a presumptuous, arrogant certainty that we are justified, but a firm belief of all the truths which God has revealed. This is taught as plainly as possible in the Bible itself by which Protestants profess to be guided. When St Paul says that "without faith it is impossible to please God," he does not in the least refer to any subjective feelings about ourselves. On the contrary, he refers the faith of which he speaks altogether to God. The reason that he gives for our being unable to please God without faith is this : "for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a Rewarder of them that seek Him."

(3.) We are also justified by faith, because we cannot be justified without it ; as we cannot be justified without hope or without charity. So the Apostle says, "We are saved by hope." "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

(4.) Again : "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ : we

also believe in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : because by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." The law here spoken of is the law of nature, or the law of Moses : and the works spoken of are those that are done without Christ, that is, without the assistance of Divine Grace. Of works done in union with Jesus Christ by grace, He says : "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." "If you keep My commandments you shall abide in My love." "You are My friends, if you do the things, that I command you." "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

Nowhere in the Bible can we find the slightest ground for saying that we are justified by faith only.

On the other hand, such a doctrine is flatly denied : "What shall it profit, if a man say he hath faith, and hath not works ? Shall faith be able to save him ?" "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead ? Was not Abraham our father justified by works ?" "Do you see that by works a man is justified : and not by faith only ?"

Yet, in the face of this, men are to be found who believe a doctrine, as I said, not only not contained in the Bible, but rejected by it. This is not only to miss the truth, but to hold error in defiance of the express words of the Holy Scriptures which they profess to revere. It is indeed very humiliating to see the depths to which the human intellect can sink, when it is cut off from the guidance of the Church. And it is impossible not to call to mind those terrible words of Isaias quoted by our Lord: "This people honoureth Me with their lips: but their heart is far from Me. And in vain do they worship Me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men."

Then again Protestantism explains away many parts of the Bible, which it cannot reject. I mean such passages as these: "Except a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee, as the heathen and publican." "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven." "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them:

and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." "This is My Body :" This is My Blood.' "Is any man sick among you ? Let him bring in the Priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord." Protestantism explains away these texts. I speak not of individuals, but of the system, and I call this betraying the Son of Man with a kiss.

III. Protestantism is Babylon : for Babylon means confusion. The confusion of tongues at Babel was only a faint type of the spiritual confusion, the confusion of doctrine, which Protestantism has brought into the world. The Church is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the city of order and of peace. But Babylon is an evil city, a city of confusion and disorder, fore-ordained to destruction. And according to the sure word of prophecy it will be destroyed : " After these things, I saw another angel come down from Heaven, having great power : and the earth was enlightened with his glory. And he cried out with a strong voice : Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen : and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every unclean spirit, and of every unclean and hateful

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bird." "Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets ; for God hath judged your judgment on her." This tells us of the final destruction of Protestantism, when it shall be swept away for ever in the presence of the Church of Jesus Christ, which it has outraged and defied ; and it tells us also of the joy of the Prophets and the Apostles and all the Saints, when they shall see the great enemy of God beaten down, and chained, and then destroyed for ever. But God is always long-suffering and merciful, and gracious. He is now inviting all Protestants to leave their idolatrous worship, and come into His Church ; the only place in which He can be adored "in spirit and in truth." Whilst the doom of Babylon is delayed, a voice from Heaven is heard, saying, "Come out from her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues." And, thank God, there are multitudes ever listening to that voice ; multitudes ever coming out of the Babylon of Protestantism; ever leaving the darkness and confusion of the kingdom of unbelief, and passing, through the golden gates, into the Household of Faith, the Roman Church, the Home and City and Temple of the Living God.

IV. The Apocalypse is full of mysteries ; and there are many verses in it which contain many meanings. Some figures may apply to the same thing under different aspects. Thus Protestantism is not only Babylon, but it is represented by the beast rising out of the sea. It rose out of the stormy, turbulent passions of men. "The wicked are like the raging sea which cannot rest ; and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire." "The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples and nations and tongues." And it is likened to the beast, because it does not seek "first the kingdom of God and His justice," but earth, and earthly things. Thus it denies the evangelical virtues, poverty, chastity, and obedience. It not only denies them, but laughs them to scorn, and holds them in derision. It forgets the example of the Son of God, of Mary, of St Joseph, of St John the Evangelist, of St Paul, of St Stephen, of St Francis of Assisi, and of St Charles Borromeo. Being unspiritual itself, it cannot discern and understand spiritual truths. In fact, if you consider it, you will see that its very life lies in the denial of these virtues. If by any possibility it could believe in them, it would cease to be

what it is. It is self-willed, seeking earnestly for riches, hunting eagerly after every kind of pleasure. In all ways it seeks to gratify the senses; in all ways it is ignorant of the Cross. So, being unable to be crucified with Christ, it is unable to live with Him. I do not mean to say, that there are not to be found in the Church proud and avaricious and worldly and sensual men: the tares must grow amongst the wheat till the harvest. I do not mean to say either, that there cannot be found amongst Protestants many persons far better than their religion, against it and in spite of it. But the Catholic Church teaches in accordance with the words of our Lord, and His Apostle St Paul, that the way of the counsels is better than the way of the commandments. In the Church, moreover, there are multitudes, both men and women, who bear witness to their belief in the counsels, by their lives; that is, by their voluntary poverty, chastity, and obedience. And though there are far greater numbers who cannot live according to the counsels, yet they all gladly acknowledge that those who are able to do so do better than themselves. They have found a way which will lead them to God; but they know that there is

"a yet more excellent way," the way of Jesus, the way of His counsels and His Passion. And it is a joy to them to see others walk on a road higher than that by which they themselves can go to the City of the King, and to know that they carry a far more shining Cross.

Let us understand this clearly. The way of the commandments is very good : and they who keep the commandments do well. But they who keep the counsels do better. It is not given to all men to keep the counsels. Our Lord himself says : "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given :" "He that can take, let him take it." Therefore the sign of the earthly mind, represented by the beast, is not to be found in this, that men live according to the commandments ; but in this, that they either deny the greater excellence of a life according to the counsels, or deny those counsels altogether.

Now Protestantism has denied, and does deny, by word and deed, the evangelical counsels. Our Lord's counsels of perfection are, in fact, to it as if they had never been spoken. It can show no constant succession of persons living according to His words. It consistently discourages all attempts of individuals to do so. If

a few persons can be found, here and there, making the attempt, they act contrary to the spirit of their sect, and by the light which flows on them from the Catholic Church. Catholic monks or Catholic nuns are the examples they set before themselves. They can find no others. There are very few such persons, and they cannot alter the general truth, that Protestantism, as a system, denies, and that nearly all Protestants, as individuals, deny, the great value which God sets on the lives of those who live by the counsels of His Son. I say that the denial of these virtues, or the denial of their value in the sight of God, is at least one mark of the beast, that is, of the earthly mind.

V. Listen to the boasting of Babylon. Loud and unrestrained are the vauntings of this apostate power. In her rebellion she glorifies herself: and never did she praise herself more loudly than she does now. "As much hath she glorified herself, and hath been in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her: because she saith in her heart, I sit a Queen, and am not a widow, and sorrow I shall not see. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be burnt with the fire, because God

is strong, who shall judge her." That God will keep His word, is certain ; that Protestantism will be destroyed, is certain ; that the wilful believers of lies shall perish, is certain. Great and terrible will be the destruction : Topheth "is prepared by the king, deep and wide. The nourishment thereof is fire and much wood ; and the breath of the Lord, as a torrent of brimstone, doth kindle it."

VI. I know of nothing which brands upon Protestantism more terribly the mark of its condemnation, than its constant endeavours to buy souls with money. St Peter says : " You were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers; but with the Precious Blood of Christ" : and we are sure that by such corruptible things no souls can ever be gained to God. Gold and silver can neither purchase the faith, nor buy the unbought love of God. Union with Jesus, by sanctifying grace, cannot be found in this way. Yet teachers of error go about, with their money in their hands, hunting for souls. They are like those to whom our Lord spoke : " You go round about sea and land to make one proselyte : and when he is made, you

make him the child of hell, twofold more than yourselves." I speak of what I have seen and known. Sometimes, persons tempted by distress, by cold, or hunger, are persuaded for a while to frequent places of heretical worship, for what they can get in the way of bodily relief. But they never in their hearts believe the error to which outwardly they conform. Sooner or later they come to themselves in that far country, in which they are lost: and they say, one by one, "I will arise, and go to my Father, and say to Him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee: I am now not worthy to be called Thy son." The light falls upon them in "the dark day and the cloudy day," as they wander upon the mountains, and the Good Shepherd brings them back safely to His own fold. So that they, who lead them astray for a while, do not gain them after all. The faith is too strong in their hearts for that. The love of God, that they have learnt in the Church, cannot be quenched by the floods on which they are tost. But what seems to me so marvellous, is that men can be found who think that, in this way, they do God service. I will assert positively, and without fear of contradiction, that such a thing

was never done by any Catholic priest. There are thousands of priests now ministering at the altars of the Church, but they are all far too certain of the Divine authority of their mission and teaching, to descend to this. They come as messengers from God, as His prophets in the world, whether men hear or whether they refuse to listen. Any one of them would feel degraded before God and his own conscience, if he tried to buy a soul with money. He could not stoop to such unutterable meanness. Like St Peter and St John, we have neither silver nor gold to offer to those who come to the Church. Christ died for all, and we desire greatly that all may come, that they may be saved. But we can only seek to win them in one way, and that is, by telling them of the love of Christ. We have nothing to offer them but the Cross in this world, and Eternal Life in the next. In the name of Jesus Christ, we can raise them from the death of sin, and make them walk ; and heal their blindness, so that they may be able to see. This is all that we can do ; for our Master's "kingdom is not of this world."

And if any man puts away all prejudices, and prays daily, in sincerity and truth, to the Holy

Ghost for guidance, and makes up his mind to count everything but loss, that he may gain Christ, and be found in Him ; if, further, like Abraham, he is ready to leave his kindred and his father's house, and go forth from the land of the idolaters, for the sake of the Gospel ; if he is determined, through evil report and good report, to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth :" then, it is absolutely certain, that such a one will be brought into the one Church of God. Our desire and prayer for all men is, that they may be saved : but they must seek God, for His own sake, and in His own way.

There are a few things I will now put down for your guidance.

1. Participation in the religious worship of heretics is absolutely forbidden. As there is only one true God, so there is only one true way of worshipping God : and that is the way of the Catholic Church. You cannot without sin try to worship God in any other way ; you cannot without sin join in the worship of any persons, whatever religion they may profess, who are out of the Church.

2. You must always keep clearly before you the great difference there is between the Catholic

religion and all other religions. The Catholic religion comes from God, and no other religion comes from Him. All other religions come from His enemy, the great apostate angel. They are corruptions which that great enemy of souls has brought in. They are perversions or distortions of the one revelation which God has given at different times. Three divine laws, which yet are one law, have been given to the world, the law of nature, the law of Moses, and the law of Christ, "Who hath destroyed death, and hath brought to light life and incorruption by the Gospel." Some false religions are corruptions of one law, some of another. Thus Protestantism is a corruption of that pure Christianity, which always has been, and is now, in the Roman Church, and ever will be in that Church, till the great day of doom. It has fragments of truth, because it holds some things in common with the Church. But whatever it has of its own is false. And whatever truths it has, it does not believe for a right reason. Private judgment is its law; and it never submits to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. It cannot be otherwise, for all these religions are merely human inventions. They are, in fact, at the best, nothing but floating

opinions brought together, into a confession, or terms of communion ; and imposed by human authority on the consciences of those who choose to submit to them. There can be no slavery more grinding, more unbearable than this. Is it not a monstrous thing that men, professing themselves all the time to be fallible, should presume to dictate to another man what he is to believe ? In the Catholic Church we listen to no human voice and submit to no human authority. Human traditions are nothing to us. We have divine traditions, and we listen to the voice of the Holy Ghost, dwelling in His Church. Never lose sight, therefore, of the great gulf which separates you from all of those who are in schism or heresy or any form of unbelief. To us in the Church it is said, " You have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." Here is the plain straight path, in which the wayfarers cannot err. But they who are outside are sitting in darkness ; as the Scripture says, " In the region of the shadow of death." As darkness drives away or tends to drive away the light, and as poison destroys or tends to destroy life, so Protestantism destroys or tends to destroy spiritual light and life. The difference between

the Church and all forms of unbelief or misbelief is the difference between light and darkness, between life and death, between heaven and hell, between God and sin.

3. You owe principally three duties to Protestants.

(1.) You owe them charity and kindness in temporal things. We have indeed specially to do good "to those who are of the household of the faith;" but we have also to "work good to all men." "God commendeth His charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us."

(2.) You ought to instruct the ignorant, if they desire to be instructed. You have the priceless treasure of the faith, and a light from Heaven has shone on you, which has not shone on them. If they are sincere in their search for truth, they will find it. You can help them in the search; and along the way that is hard and difficult. Of very many, we can "bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." And many there are who believe their heresy, through ignorance or weakness, and not through wilfulness or hardness of heart. And great numbers are brought month by month,

year by year, into the Church. Of this time, as of all times, it will be afterwards said: "The Lord increased daily together, such as should be saved."

(3.) If they are careless or obstinate, and refuse to be instructed, you still ought to pray for them. There are few limits to the power of prayer. If you are abused, reviled, mocked, insulted for your religion, you still must pray for those who are set against you. Our Blessed Lord Himself says, "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father, who is in Heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust."

But as you love God, with all your hearts and souls and strength; as, with all your strength also, you love the faith; so, with all your hearts and souls and strength, you must hate every kind of heresy or unbelief. You should be firm and strong in your hatred of error, whether it be intellectual or moral. Be as kind as you please to Protestants individually, but never confuse the person with the error which misleads him. You can love the person, but hate, strongly and

to death, that error which leads him astray. Personally I have every reason to feel kindly to Protestants as individuals; personally I know much of their many virtues, and how much better many of them are than we should suppose to be possible from their mutilated Creed; but I know of no words strong enough to express my abhorrence of that system by which they are deceived. I distinguish clearly between the system and its victims; and I feel great sorrow for those who are blinded, and do not "come to the knowledge of the truth." But the system, which misleads them and blinds them and fetters them, is false and self-willed and unscriptural and idolatrous, intensely lawless and intensely antichristian, utterly to be detested, utterly to be abhorred, because "before God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels," it is an accursed thing. The spirit of Protestantism is the spirit of Anti-christ. It is a spirit which changes into many forms: but in some antichristian form or other it will remain till the end. It will take many new shapes, so that even its own friends would be unable to recognise it; but it will always have "a mouth speaking blasphemies and great things;" it will always be in antagonism to the

law of God ; it will always deny His revelation. Then at last "the Lord Jesus will kill it with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy it with the Brightness of His Coming."

What may be the terribleness of the future we cannot tell, nor does it matter ; for God will be always with us. " Unless those days had been shortened no flesh should be saved ; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened." Well, therefore, may our Lord Jesus Christ say to us, to one and to all : " Behold, I come quickly : hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

We pray Thee, Jesus, Lover of Souls, bring into Thy Church the wanderers outside, for Thou hast redeemed them by Thy Precious Blood.

CALVINISM.

THE great aim of the Catholic Church is to preach Christ ; to teach the world about Him, and the Faith which He has revealed, and “the grace and truth” which He brought to men. She has always striven that there should be as many as possible of whom it may be said, Before your “eyes, Jesus Christ hath been set forth, crucified among you.” With a strong voice she delivers her faithful message to the world. She knows that “there is no other name under Heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved,” but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So for two thousand years, in evil report and good report, through prosperity or persecution, in weal or woe, amongst enemies or friends, in season and out of season, she has been preaching Christ to the world. His Redemption has been the burden of her message. She has been constantly saying to all men, I determined not “to know anything amongst you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

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Through and by her preaching, her doctrine, and her Sacraments, we have been able to say to all men those words, which I have quoted, and rejoice to quote again : Before your “eyes, Jesus Christ hath been set forth, crucified among you.” For this her Confessors have sorrowed, and her Preachers have lifted up their voices ; for this her Virgins have lived, and her Martyrs have died triumphantly in their joy. Always, like St John the Baptist, she has been the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “ Make straight the way of the Lord.” Always, like the Angel whom St John saw, she has been “ flying through the midst of Heaven, having the Eternal Gospel to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue, saying : “ Fear the Lord, and give Him honour, because the hour of His Judgment is come ; and adore ye Him, Who made Heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water.” Faithfully, devotedly, untiringly, through all these years, with a great thirst for the glory of God, with a great thirst for the salvation of souls, she has been preaching Christ ; Redemption by His Cross, Sanctification by His Spirit. There has never been anything in the world like the un-

wavering faithfulness of the Church to Jesus, her Divine Bridegroom.

Out of the Church, Christ is never preached except imperfectly. There are little fragments of His Revelation scattered about in the world ; and that is all. Sometimes men hold the truth about Him, but deny its consequences, especially as regards the Incarnation. Sometimes they hold the truth about Him in words, but speak of Him in a way which shows that in reality they do not understand the truths which they profess to hold, or see whither they tend. There is nothing more certain than that no sect of Christians, whether it be Methodist, or Independent, or Anglican, or Baptist, or anything else, does in truth hold the right doctrine about the mystery of the Incarnation. They are all, more or less, Nestorians in reality, whatever they may be in words. I will give an example. It is taken from the writings of a man greatly esteemed amongst Calvinists. He professes to be orthodox on the subject of the Incarnation, and yet he actually holds that our Lord was exalted to the throne from which Lucifer fell. I could hardly believe my eyes when I read the words. I will put it to any one : Can a man really believe that

Jesus Christ is God, when he talks of His being raised to the throne of a creature? Jesus is so great and so glorious in the Majesty of His Godhead; His Sacred Humanity is so perfectly God; that it would be contrary to every Catholic instinct, and would greatly shock all our feelings of reverence, to suppose that even Mary, His Virgin Mother, was exalted to the throne of the fallen "Son of the Morning." We would shrink instinctively from such a thought, even supposing that he was, as is very likely, at that time, the first of all the creatures of God. Something much more glorious than that throne is needed for the Queen of Glory, the Queen of Angels, the Queen of the great Kingdom of Jesus. We cannot say for certain what Saint is predestined to that throne from which Satan fell; as a matter of private belief, and as a pious opinion, I hold myself that it has been given to the Seraphic Father, St Francis of Assisi, the Patron Saint of my father, St Charles; but, at any rate, it is absolutely certain that its glory would be insufficient for our Lady, because of the relations in which she stands to God. This writer then says: "Hence learn that Satan before his fall was the Messiah or Christ, as he was the anointed." I

cannot tell the meaning of the whole sentence : but there it is faithfully quoted. If it mean anything, it seems to say that Satan, if he had not fallen, would have been our Redeemer. That is, we might have had a Redeemer, who, as the event has shown, did not choose to use Divine grace and keep himself from sin.

Again, he says : "These things show another thing, wherein Jesus is exalted into the place of Lucifer, that whereas he had the honour to dwell in the Holy of Holies continually, so Jesus is there entered, not as the High Priests of old, but to be there continually, and in this respect is exalted higher than Lucifer ever was." It is utterly untrue to say that Lucifer was ever in the Holy of Holies. He then goes on to explain "that whereas Lucifer was only near to the Throne, or kneeling on the Mercy-seat in humble posture, covering it with his wings, Jesus is admitted to sit down for ever with God on His Throne." The intense irreverence of the whole idea is seen in the word "admitted." Our Lord was God in His Human Nature, from the first moment of His Incarnation. He was never admitted to any honour or dignity or office. He had everything in His own right, from the first moment of His

Human Life, simply because He was God. He has indeed two Natures, but He is only one Divine Person. No man could have written about His being admitted to any dignity, if he had really believed in the Divinity of Jesus.

He goes on : "In another respect also Jesus succeeds Lucifer, viz., in being the covering Cherub." Lucifer "fell from his innocence and dignity, and Jesus, in his stead, becomes the Cherub that covereth." I have never read anything more horrible in my life. Only think of a man who professes to be a Christian, deliberately writing down such words. It is well for us sometimes to see what misbelief leads well-meaning men to say about our Divine Master, the great Keeper of Israel.

Persons out of the Church often say of us that we give too much honour to our Lady : that in fact we give her the honour we ought to give to our Lord. This is of course untrue. But certainly, if this be a specimen of the honour they give our Lord, I acknowledge that we do give to our Lady a greater honour than they give to Him. I have shown you how an esteemed Calvinist speaks of our Lord's office and dignity. Certainly this is not quite the kind of thing

that we say even of our Lady, much less of Him. The honour that we give to our Divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, must be something altogether incomprehensible to such persons as these. This is only one example out of the many that I could give to show that Jesus Christ is never fully and faithfully preached out of the Roman Church ; even by those who make the greatest boast of preaching Him truly. He is often preached imperfectly ; and such preaching is better than nothing. Twilight is better than darkness. So the great Apostle Paul says : “ Some indeed even out of envy and contention, but some also for good-will, preach Christ ; and some out of charity, knowing that I am set for defence of the Gospel. And some out of contention preach Christ, not sincerely, supposing that they raise affliction to my bonds. But what then ? So that every way, whether by occasion or by truth, Christ be preached, in this also I rejoice and will rejoice.” So, evidently, it is better for men to know a little of the truth than not to know it at all ; that is, if they are in ignorance about the rest. But it is better for men not to know the truth at all, than to contradict it perversely, wilfully, and obstinately.

I am speaking now about what may be called the great doctrines of Christianity : such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, our Lord's Divinity, and the Universality of His Redemption. At the same time, you must remember that a man is as much a heretic for denying, obstinately or maliciously, the smallest revealed Truth, as for denying the greatest. That every one has an Angel-Guardian is of faith. It is not a mere poetical fancy ; but a truth which God has revealed. If any man deny that he has an Angel-Guardian, he is as much a heretic as if he were to deny the doctrine of the Trinity. And these denials have an equally bad effect on his mind ; for to deny the very smallest part of God's Revelation is in effect to deny the principle of authority, and the whole principle also of Faith, which depends on the Truthfulness of God. St James says of the commandments : "Whoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all." So, as to Revelation, we may truly say that, if a man believe it all but one doctrine, in effect he denies it all. Now I may give one illustration of what I mean. It is better for a man to know part of the multiplication-table than not to know any of it, if he know

rightly what he does know. But if the only effect of his learning it should be to make him believe that two and two are five, I think that he had better not learn it at all. In the same way it is better for a man to know a few Christian doctrines than not to know any, if he believe rightly, as far as he knows. But if the effect of his knowledge of Christianity be to make him deny such vital doctrines as the Divinity of our Lord, or the Universality of His Redemption, as the Socinians and Calvinists do, then I think he had better never have heard of Christianity at all. There is a beautiful proportion in the works of God, supernatural as well as natural. All Revealed Truths have not an equal value ; and consequently all heresies are not equally bad : some are much worse than others. Again, heresies about the same truth are not all equally bad ; for some deny a particular Truth more completely and more virulently than others. Bearing these things in mind, I can see no heresies so antichristian and so inhuman as Socinianism and Calvinism. We have to use words in a very wide and lax sense, before we can call these sects Christian. Let Christ be preached sincerely, though imperfectly and

obscurely, and I can and will rejoice. The faintest sound of the Gospel is refreshing. But Socinians and Calvinists have no gospel whatever. They do not and cannot preach Christ. Socinians deny His Godhead: and Calvinists in effect deny His Sacrifice on the Cross. A Calvinist has in reality no gospel at all.

I. They, in common with other Protestants, hold the doctrine of reputed or imputed justification. They teach that God does not really make a sinner just when He justifies him, but considers him to be just, for the merits of Christ, and treats him as if he were. Out of numberless instances, which I might give, three may suffice. Luther says, "The justification of a Christian is not an essential justification, but a reputed one:" "The faithful, on account of the obedience of Christ, are looked upon as just, though by corrupt nature they are truly sinners, and remain such till death:" "We are accounted just in Christ, which in ourselves we are not." In other words, a God of Infinite purity, infinite justice, infinite discernment, infinite truth, plays a sort of trick on Himself, and considers a man to be that which he is not; and so, by some kind of contradiction, is enabled to love a man who is

displeasing to Him. Merely to state this doctrine is to refute it. On the other hand, the Catholic Church teaches that God's words are efficacious, and that He always does what He says. He also sees everything as it is : and His judgments are perfectly truthful like Himself. Consequently, she teaches that God makes a man just before He considers him to be so. Such a man is neither sinless nor perfect, but just or righteous, in the sight of God, according to the degree of his sanctity. All this is done for the Merits of Christ, and by the indwelling Presence of the Holy Ghost. According to the Protestant theory, God, Who is true, puts a white garment over a black soul, and then considers that soul to be white because of that which our Lord has done. According to the Catholic teaching, the soul is actually cleansed by the Precious Blood of our Lord. The grace which is in it is inherent. It has an intrinsic holiness, more or less, weaker or stronger, as the case may be. God makes the black soul white, for the Merits of our Blessed Lord and by His Divine Grace ; and then He considers it to be what He has made it. The Protestant theory dishonours God, while the Catholic truth magnifies Him and glorifies Him.

2. Calvinists hold the doctrine of reprobation. Some of them, known by the name of sub-lapsarians, hold upon this subject views in some degree softened : but the supra-lapsarians hold the hardest and harshest views. The doctrine of reprobation teaches that men are lost, not through their own fault and in the exercise of their free-will, but through some inevitable necessity over which they have no control. Can you imagine a doctrine more terrible than this, and more dishonouring to God? So, on the other hand, they hold the doctrine of election, by which it is meant that men are chosen for Heaven, and brought by a sort of necessity thither, as if they were stones carried in a man's hand, and not rational beings, as they are. But the Church teaches us that every man is saved or lost by his own free choice. We can do nothing towards eternal life without Divine grace ; but grace necessary for salvation is given to every one, and no one can be lost except through his own fault. We can easily see that it must be so. Our salvation is either in our own hands or it is not. If it be, we can, by co-operating with Divine grace, secure that salvation, as intelligent beings, made to the image and likeness of God ;

if it be not, we are mere machines, and have no right to the name of men. But still the Church keeps always sounding in our ears the words of our Lord : "Without Me ye can do nothing." Still He is with every one. He is "the true Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." This is the breadth of His unchangeable Charity, Human and Divine.

3. Calvinists hold the doctrine of the Indefectibility of Grace. This doctrine, in its issues, is utterly lawless. When a man is converted from sin to God, and justified, they say that he is "saved ;" and one of their maxims is, "once saved, always saved." They hold that a man cannot fall from grace: and that sin does not separate the elect from God, that is, after they have once been brought into a state of grace. They will not go so far as to say, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound ;" but logically, according to their principles, they ought to say so. Fortunately their hearts get the better of their heads. There is a beautiful text in the Epistles of St Peter, which tells us that spiritually we are born of incorruptible seed, "by the Word of God, Who liveth and remaineth for ever." They misunderstand this

text, though it is as plain as can be. I do not mean that this is the only passage of Scripture on which they depend ; but I give it as a specimen. The Word, by Whom we are spiritually born, is indeed incorruptible, for He is God ; but we can drive Him away from our souls by sin. And we can drive away His Holy Spirit. If this were not possible, what would be the meaning of St Paul's words where he says, "Quench not the Spirit?" I said that this doctrine, in its issues, is lawless. And so it is. For if you cannot destroy grace in the soul, if sin cannot pluck us away from the Hand of God, what motive would be left to keep men from sin? Some men indeed, and I may say many men, would keep themselves from sin out of the pure love of God, irrespective of consequences ; but the mass of men are not governed by motives like this. And, in very many cases, if you were to tell a man that sin would not separate him from God, or imperil his eternal salvation, he would go on committing sin, because of that which you had told him. Now, of course, I do not mean to say that all Calvinists are antinomian in their lives. It is one thing to say that a man is an atheist, and another thing

to say that he holds opinions which logically lead to atheism. So, although I hold that Calvinistic views are utterly lawless, and therefore utterly immoral in themselves, I do not say that all Calvinists are lawless and immoral in their lives. Many of them, fortunately, are better than their belief. However, I do know of one instance, where a man, living in gross and shameful sin, said that his sins could not do him any harm, as he was one of the elect. And how can his teachers complain of him? One of them, for instance, speaking of very horrible sins, says, These "do not hurt the pleasant children, but rather work for their good." Again, he says, "God sees no sin in believers, whatever sin they may commit. My sin might displease God: my person is always acceptable to Him. Though I should outsin Manasses, I should not be less a pleasant child, because God always views me in Christ. Hence in the midst of" sins (he specifies some dreadful sins, which I need not copy out), "He can address me with: 'Thou art all-fair, my dove, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee.' Though I believe not those who say, 'Let us sin that grace may abound,' yet" these sins "shall

upon the whole make me holier on earth and merrier in Heaven." Passing over the intense irreverence of the word "merrier," as applied to the joys of the Beatific Vision, is there not something perfectly appalling in this passage? It is horrible beyond all words. For if the vilest and grossest sins "on the whole" make a man "holier on earth," ought he not to commit them perseveringly, that he may increase in holiness and grace? Could you have imagined that a man ever wrote such blasphemous rubbish as this?

4. Calvinists deny the Universality of the Redemption of Jesus, and say that He died only for the elect. This doctrine is horrible in its ingratitude. Dear, suffering Lord, is it possible that men can be found who profess to be Thy disciples, and yet disbelieve the great work which Thou hast wrought? Our Lord is "the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," as I said before. On the Cross He embraced the whole world in the arms of His charity. His love and sorrow then reached to all; and His Precious Blood flowed over all. These men say that Christ died only for the elect, though the Bible says

that He was made Man, "that through the grace of God He might taste death for all." He hung in lingering agony on His Cross ; His Eyes were dim with tears and blood ; His Head was crowned with thorns ; His Feet and Hands were burnt up with pain ; the fever of His thirst was an agony, unbearable by flesh and blood ; His Divine Heart, torn to pieces with anguish, was thirsting with a thirst that could not be slaked, a thirst that no streams of water could quench, for the salvation of souls. Then they ask us to believe that in the very crisis of His love and agony, of His suffering and His Redemption, He destroyed the beauty and gracefulness and efficacy of His Passion and Death, by limiting their power and offering them to God only for a few. What a horrible blasphemy against the world-wide charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Out of all the terrible forms of unbelief that ever cursed the world, can you find one more terrible than this ?

From what I have said, you can see what a fearful religion Calvinism is. I can find no words to express my hatred and scorn and loathing of such a system as this. It leads

logically to atheism ; for the god of the Calvinists is an impossibility. If there were no god but the god that they profess to worship, there would be no god at all. It is immoral, because it teaches that no sin can destroy grace in the soul. It is merciless and inhuman in teaching the doctrine of reprobation ; and it is utterly antichristian in denying the Universality of our Lord's Redemption. What should you feel, if you had to choose between Paganism and Calvinism ? Calvinism is surely one of the most diabolical religions that the enemy of God and man ever invented. The god of the Calvinist is not the God of the Christian. Our God is gracious, long-suffering, merciful, tender, compassionate, pure, just ; but the god of the Calvinist is merciless, unjust, and vindictive : a god whom no good man could love, and no brave man could fear. Any homage paid to such a deity would be a degradation. But all homage paid to the Christians' God exalts, ennobles, purifies, transforms, and crowns, those who give it.

Blessed be Jesus, Who died for all men ; and Who has brought us into His Church.

Blessed be Jesus, Who did not forget one soul, when He made His great satisfaction for sin.

Blessed be Jesus, our Judge, Who will “render to every man according to his works.”

Blessed be Jesus, the Truth, Who sees all things as they are.

Blessed be Jesus, our God, Who is “not a respecter of persons ;” for “in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh justice is acceptable to Him.”

Blessed be Jesus, into Whose Presence “there shall not enter” “anything defiled, or that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie ; but they that are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb.”

Blessed be Jesus, Who dwells always with us in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

ARE YOU FORGIVEN?

TWO worlds are contained in this question : the world of darkness and the world of light. They who are forgiven belong to God and Jesus; but they who are not forgiven, they who for any reason are defiled by mortal sin, belong to the devil, the great enemy of God. Upon the answer therefore which we can give to this question, at the moment of our death, depends our eternal state. They who die unforgiven, that is, out of a state of grace, or, as the Sacred Scriptures say, without God and without Christ, go straight to hell, straight into the darkness of the terrible prison, into the pool burning with fire and brimstone. As lead sinks into the sea, so a lost soul sinks into hell. As soon as ever it is separated from the body it enters the place of eternal punishment, and from that place it can never escape. But a forgiven soul goes either to Heaven or Purgatory. If it has no debt to pay

to the justice of God, then it goes straight to Heaven. But generally there is some temporal punishment due to a soul, even after the eternal punishment is remitted. And if any of this temporal punishment, less or more, be due to a soul for its sins, then that soul goes to Purgatory, for greater or less punishment as the case may be. But one day there will be no Purgatory, but only Heaven and hell. A day will come when the last soul will be brought from Purgatory to Jesus : and then every soul will either be with Mary in Heaven, or with Satan and his evil angels in the darkness of the lost. So that in this question, as I said, two worlds are contained. There can be no change in our state after death. A soul in the state of grace at the moment of death remains in a state of grace or glory, that is, in union with God for ever. But a soul out of the state of grace at the moment of death remains out of the state of grace, that is, away from God, for ever. "If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be."

Now you may die at any moment. At any moment there may be laid upon you the hand of the Angel of death. It is impossible therefore

for you to feel too anxious about your present state, for it may be a question of the loss or possession of God for ever. We ought indeed to desire to be forgiven out of the pure love of God and for His sake : but I do not now dwell upon that. I am setting this question before you as a question of eternal happiness or eternal misery for yourselves. How very earnestly therefore and constantly should you ask yourselves such questions as these: Am I forgiven? "What must I do that I may be saved?"

Let me give you some help towards answering these questions.

I. Every soul that has ever been created is either in a state of grace or out of it : either justified or not justified : either the friend of God or the enemy of God. In the spiritual world there is no neutral ground. We therefore say to ourselves, How may we know that we are forgiven? What kind of certainty may we have of our state before God? What kind of assurance can I have that I am justified? The Church gives us a plain and easy answer. You cannot have the assurance of faith ; but you can have, and ought to have, the assurance of moral certainty. Nothing is of faith but that which God

has revealed. In an ordinary way He does not reveal to us that we are in a state of grace. He has sometimes revealed this to His Saints, and then with the certainty of Divine faith they have known of their acceptance with Him. I will take two instances, Saint Daniel and Saint Paul. Daniel had a special revelation not only of his being in a state of grace, but also of his final perseverance: "Go thou thy way until the time appointed: and thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot to the end of the days." And Paul was enabled to say: "I am even now ready to be sacrificed; and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just Judge will give to me in that day." In these cases God made a special revelation to His servants. And if He should make a similar revelation to any of us we should know about our spiritual state with as much certainty as they did. But in the ordinary course of His Providence we shall not know about ourselves in this way. Still we can always have a moral certainty that we are in the state of grace; and this certainty is very great and in every way

sufficient for us. It precludes all reasonable grounds of doubt: it gives all reasonable grounds of confidence. It would be absolute and final certainty, like the certainty of the Faith, but for our weakness and imperfections and sinfulness : “ He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself : ” “ The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God.” This testimony is absolutely certain and perfect in itself and in the whole Church. But it is not thus certain and thus perfect in individual souls, for each soul is imperfect in its apprehension of the testimony, and uncertain as to its fulfilment of the conditions. And that God offers us salvation only on certain conditions is part of His revelation. Salvation offered to us without conditions would be the denial of the freewill which God has given to us ; and would be also the denial of His goodness in the moral government of the world. Beside this, it would degrade us from the rank of responsible beings, and would transform us into unreasoning machines. There would then be in us none of that image and likeness of God in which we were created. There are persons out of the Church who hold the doctrines of uncon-

ditional salvation and of assurance : but these doctrines are simply antichristian and soul-destroying. Still we ought never to rest till we are morally certain that we are in a state of grace. How may we know this ? Let us see.

II. There is only one thing that can cleanse us from our sins. The great Sacrifice has been offered on the Cross once for all. It can never be repeated, but stands alone, supreme in its majesty, and supreme in its reconciling power. But because that Sacrifice is one and eternal, therefore it is unceasing. The holy Sacrifice of the Mass is its true drawing-out amongst men. Once on Calvary the Blood of our Lord was poured out to the last drop. That Blood is the price of our redemption. Jesus is the Lamb without spot or blemish, slain for the sins of the world. Nothing but the Blood of Jesus can cleanse from sin. If you have sinned there is no chance of escape except through the Red Sea of the Precious Blood. In the present dispensation and according to the present Decrees, "without the shedding of blood there can be no remission " of sin. By the Blood of our Lord, and only by His Blood, we can be delivered from the guilt of sin and from its punishment.

III. I take it for granted that you belong to the true Church of God. That Church is the Ark, of which the ark of Noe was a type, and they who are in it are saved from the destroying waters of the flood. "Believe in the Lord Jesus: and thou shalt be saved." But to believe in Jesus is to believe in His Divinity, His Incarnation, His Revelation, His Church, His Vicar, and His perpetual Office. A mere belief that He came into the world, or that He died for us, is not belief in Him. Neither is it sufficient to have a mere belief in His Doctrine or His Sacraments. "Faith without works is dead :" "The devils also believe and tremble." Something more is wanted than mere historical belief, or even than the gift of faith. We cannot have anything more certain than our Lord's own words. He says : "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments." "You are My friends if you do the things that I command you." Then St John says : "We know that we have known Him, if we keep His commandments." "Whatsoever we ask we shall receive of Him, because we keep His commandments." "This is the charity of God that we keep His commandments." If therefore we wish to be saved

we must believe in our Lord, and do those things which He commands us to do. This must be the law of our lives.

IV. But, unless we are forgiven, all that we do goes for nothing as far as eternal life is concerned. A soul in mortal sin can gain no merit ; for God has only promised His rewards to those who are in union with our Lord. You see therefore how impossible it is for me to exaggerate the importance of the question : Am I forgiven ? You must feel its importance if you think of it. The more that you think of it, the more you must feel this. How then may you know whether you are forgiven or not ? Nothing can be plainer than the answer. You are forgiven, if you have confessed your sins and received absolution with right dispositions. If you have mortal sins on your soul, and do not confess them or intend to confess them, as soon as possible, then you cannot be forgiven. It is true that if you make an act of the perfect love of God you are justified at once, then and there ; your sins, however great and terrible they may be, fall off from you ; and the chains of guilt that bind you, are destroyed as dry hay and stubble are destroyed in the fire.

This is the effect of an act of sovereign love in the soul. For the love of God above all things and mortal sin cannot exist together. But you must remember that part of this justifying love of God is an intention to do all that God commands. Now He commands us to confess our sins that we may be absolved from them. If therefore a Catholic be sorry for his sins, or think that he is sorry, and yet does not intend to confess them at the first opportunity, he is incapable of making such an act of love as God requires for justification. An act of the sovereign love of God justifies us ; but a part of that act is the intention to confess our sins as soon as we can. But there are millions who are justified without perfect contrition. How is this ? The Council of Trent tells us what contrition is : "Contrition is sorrow of soul for sin committed, and detestation of that sin, together with a resolution not to sin for the future." Now contrition is perfect or imperfect. Perfect contrition is that hatred of sin which springs from a motive of perfect love, that is, from the thought of the goodness of God when He is supremely loved for His Own sake. Imperfect contrition, or attrition, is that hatred of sin

which springs from some other supernatural motive ; such as a consideration of the baseness and deformity of sin, the fear of hell, or the desire of eternal life. Attrition is sufficient for our justification in the Sacrament of Penance. Thus contrition justifies us before Absolution : but attrition only justifies us in and with Absolution. This is the law of forgiveness which God has established : and if we wish to be forgiven we must be forgiven in His way. There is no doctrine more humbling to the pride of the natural heart than this doctrine of Confession and Absolution. But I will speak more of this in the next Reading on Confession. I only say now that we must always seek for forgiveness in God's way, and not in our own way. We must be humble, teachable, child-like ; not proud and self-satisfied and self-righteous. There is a doctrine about the forgiveness of sins which you ought to abhor with all your strength. It is held by many persons out of the Church, and is called "justification by faith only." Now this doctrine is simply a doctrine of devils ; and, almost more than any other, is likely to drag down souls to hell. It is and must be a great sorrow to us to

know how Satan disguises himself, and transforms himself sometimes into the appearance of an angel of light, that by any means he may destroy some.

But there is a true way of forgiveness; the way of the Gospel, the way of the Cross, the way of God. The Precious Blood of Jesus washes away your sins in the Sacrament of Penance. In the Name of Jesus, our crucified Saviour, I entreat every one who reads this to kneel down before God and say to himself, Am I forgiven? Have I made a good confession? Have I made my peace with God through the Blood of His Son? Am I a child of God?

The evil world is passing swiftly away: the night cometh in which none can work: the terrible Day of judgment is at hand. The lost will be cast away for ever into the darkness: and only those who are forgiven by the Blood of Jesus shall enter into the joy of their Lord.

CONFESSiON.

IF we wish to get rid of our sins we must confess them. God has appointed a way, and we must not choose for ourselves. Why God has ordained the Sacrament of Penance I cannot tell ; but we may be quite sure that He has done so for some wise and good reason. In His Wisdom He sees that it is good for us to be cleansed from our sins in this way, and not in any other way. And we do know for certain that God delights in obedience. “Doth the Lord desire whole burnt-offerings and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices ; and to hearken is better than to offer the fat of rams. Because it is like the sin of witchcraft, to rebel ; and, like the crime of idolatry, to refuse to obey.” This is the secret of the whole matter. Otherwise I cannot tell why Eliseus said to Naaman : “Go and wash

seven times in the Jordan, and thy flesh shall recover health, and thou shalt be clean." The answer of Naaman was exactly like the answer of persons out of the Church now, when they are told to confess their sins that they may be forgiven. "Naaman was angry and went away, saying: I thought he would have come out to me, and standing would have invoked the Name of the Lord his God, and have touched with his hand the place of the leprosy and have healed me. Are not the Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the rivers of Israel? Why may I not wash in them and be made clean?" Why not indeed? The waters of Jordan have not any healing property more than the waters of Abana. Why should not Naaman choose his own river, and wash and be clean? The fact is that Naaman wished to be healed in his own way; and Eliseus, a prophet of God, chose that he should be healed in God's way. Now it is the pride of the natural heart that makes men reject Confession. Why should they humble themselves before their fellow-creatures? What right has God to appoint messengers to act for Him in the absolution of sinners? If He

wishes to forgive them, let Him forgive them in their own way and on their own terms. I do not say that they put this into so many words, but they act as if they meant to speak thus. Now we know that God will have His own way ; that He ought to have His own way; for His way is always simply perfect ; and that therefore we cannot presume to dictate to Him. He might have ordained many ways for the forgiveness of sins, but He has chosen one ; and, because He has chosen, we ought to be content. But proud men, self-righteous men, men out of the Church, do not choose to be justified in God's way. And indeed many well-meaning persons are misled about this matter, and have an ignorant dislike of the holy practice of Confession. The Church, the Prophet of God in the world, says to them, "Wash in the waters of Confession, and be made clean." And they are angry and say, "We thought we should have nothing to do but say that we believe. Is not justification by faith only better than the Sacrament of Penance? Are not the Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the rivers of Israel ? Why may we not be justified by faith and be made clean?" Why .

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not indeed? There is only one reason, that I know of, why this may not be. God has ordained otherwise. It is not well for us to try to be wiser than God.

But these persons say that Confession leads men to commit sin, for they know that if they sin they can easily get absolution. Such a statement is simply absurd; it is even ludicrously absurd. They who make it hold that a man can get absolution by a mere act of his own mind; for they hold the doctrine of justification by faith only, and to be absolved from mortal sin, or to be justified, is the same thing. We have to confess our sins to a Priest with true sorrow of heart and true purpose of amendment. And if we have done wrong to any, we must make restitution. Theirs is a much easier way of getting absolution than ours. Does the easiness of obtaining forgiveness lead them into sin? It may do so, but I cannot say that it does, for I do not know. At any rate, our way of getting absolution is much more difficult than theirs. If, therefore, the easiness of getting absolution with us is according to them an incentive to sin, what shall we say of the far easier way by which they think that they obtain forgiveness?

Then they say that people are taught evil by the questions put to them in Confession. You know how false such a statement is. You know how careful every Priest is never to say a word, or ask a question, which could suggest anything wrong to the penitent. It is necessary of course sometimes to ask questions about the circumstances of a sin, when it is confessed : but this is a very different thing from suggesting a sin to a person ignorant of it. If we have a wound in our bodies, it must be dressed and bound up that it may be healed ; if we have in our souls "wounds and bruises and swelling sores," they must be probed ; if we commit sins, we must be questioned about them in the presence of God, and the light of the Holy Ghost. Whatever our sins may be, they must be dealt with, and dealt with faithfully, if our souls are to be saved : but this is not to suggest sin, or put what is wrong in any minds: it is to do the work of God according to the mind of Jesus Christ. It would indeed be a blessed thing, if there were no sins to confess ; but that day will never come till all the Elect are safe within the walls of the New Jerusalem. Every Catholic who reads this will bear witness, in the presence of God,

to the scrupulous care with which Priests, in the Sacrament of Penance and out of it, strive by all the means in their power to guard purity of soul and conscience in those with whom they have to do. And, if any one says the contrary, he says that which is not true. If he knows it to be false, he is guilty of a very terrible sin in speaking as he does ; then, in the fullest sense of the words of the Beloved Disciple, "he is a liar;" but, even if he thinks it to be true, still he is to blame for being mistaken on a subject concerning which he could, with reasonable care, be rightly informed. And remember, there is nothing which the devil hates more than Confession, for nothing saves more souls from destruction ; there is nothing, therefore, which the enemies of God, and all who are out of His Church, hate more than this holy Sacrament of Penance, which is the great Fountain and River of the Precious Blood of Jesus, springing and flowing for the salvation of souls.

God, then, has ordained the Sacrament of Penance as the way by which the Blood of Jesus is applied to our souls for the remission of sin. Nothing but that Blood can cleanse from sin ; and we find it in the Confessional. Be

careful, therefore, to make good confessions. For if you make bad confessions, they do not benefit your soul, but on the contrary greatly injure it. If you have not the right dispositions, though the Priest may say the words of absolution over you, God does not ratify the sentence in Heaven. You must have a true sorrow for your sins, because they are displeasing to God. You must also have a true resolution never to commit them any more. And you must be very careful never to conceal a mortal sin in confession. To do so would be to commit the fearful sin of sacrilege, and to lie to the Holy Ghost. The proud and the self-willed and the careless stay away from the Sacrament of Penance, despising it or forgetting it. But all penitent and child-like souls, all faithful and loving souls, walking in the way of God and not following the devices of their own hearts, hasten joyfully and humbly to the fountain of cleansing which Divine Love has appointed; the Fountain of the Five Wounds of Jesus, of His Precious Blood and Sacred Heart.

DO YOU GO TO MASS?

WE ought to be able to take it for granted that every Catholic, who is bound to do so, goes regularly to Mass. It should never be necessary for a Priest to ask any of his people this question, *Do you go to Mass?*

But just as men give themselves up to sins, which are transgressions of the law of God, so also they give themselves up to sins, which are transgressions of the law of His Church.

One of the precepts of the Church is, that all, who are not lawfully hindered, are bound to hear Mass on every Sunday, and every other day of obligation.

No Catholic is ignorant of this; every Catholic, therefore, who misses Mass, through his own fault, when he is bound to hear it, is deliberately guilty of mortal sin.

Now I want to impress this upon you as

strongly as I can ; I want, if possible, to get you to see the greatness of this sin.

But, first, let me say one word about hearing Mass, from devotion. There is no doubt that the world would be very different from what it is, if more people heard Mass as often as possible. There is no doubt, and can be no doubt, that myriads of graces are locked up in the store-houses of God, which would descend in showers upon us and the world, if we sought them from Jesus, in the Holy Mass. We should, therefore, be far better than we are, if we were found oftener before the Altar at the time of the Holy Sacrifice. People in general little know what they lose by hearing Mass so seldom as they do. What is worse, they are so blinded by the world, and the spirit of the world, that they do not listen to the words spoken to them about this great truth. They should hear Mass, whenever they can do so with prudence and justice. But it is our coldness and our lukewarmness that keep us away from the Altar.

However, it is not of this that I wish now to write ; but of the great sin which men commit in missing Mass, when they are bound to hear it.

You understand, of course, that God never

expects you to do that which is impossible. He is very just, and never reaps where He has not sown. It would, therefore, be absurd for any one to confess as a sin that he did not hear Mass on a day when he was kept in his house by illness. If a man cannot get out of bed, he cannot go to Church ; that is certain. This is not sin ; for "Sin is the transgression of the law." But there are many reasons which you might think sufficient to excuse you from hearing Mass which are not sufficient. If it be impossible for you to go to Mass, you can be in no doubt ; but in all other cases you should ask advice from your confessor.

There are four reasons, amongst others, why this sin of missing Mass has a special malignity.

I. There is, first, the great value of that Sacrifice which you neglect. The greater the value of any spiritual benefit, the more inexcusable are we if we despise it. If you neglect Mass, you despise Mass. If you despise Mass, you despise Jesus Christ. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the drawing-out of the Holy Sacrifice on Calvary. That Sacrifice can never be repeated, for "Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many," as St Paul teaches us.

But yet His Sacrifice is eternal ; for it is said of Him, "Thou art a Priest for ever." And, again, we are told that He appears "now in the presence of God for us." Therefore there must be somewhere a continuation of that one great Sacrifice, and this can only be found in the Sacrifice of the Mass on earth, and the Sacrifice which our Lord ceaselessly offers in Heaven, in the midst of the Throne, "a Lamb standing as it were slain."

II. There is, then, the clearness of the command. No one can be ignorant of it ; no one can be in doubt about it. And the plainer that any command is, the more inexcusable are we if we disobey it. Our Lord is very strong in warning us about this : "That servant, who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes." "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required ; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more."

III. Next, there is the easiness of obeying. It is not as if there were strong and violent temptations to this sin, as there are to many sins. You stay away from Mass through indolence, or

carelessness, or forgetfulness, or indifference ; you will not take the trouble to go. You keep on wilfully breaking a precept of the Church, when, with scarcely an effort, you are able to keep it. It would, indeed, be difficult to find many sins much greater than this.

IV. And then comes, terrible and dark, the guilt of mortal sin. You actually separate yourself from God ; you quench His Spirit in your souls ; you trample the Blood of Jesus under your feet ; you grieve the loving heart of Mary, and the heart of your ever-watchful Angel-guardian ; and all because you will not take the trouble to go to Church. You are not afraid to go on week after week, perhaps year after year, heaping sin on sin and guilt on guilt.

But do not for a moment think that nothing more is needed than to hear Mass. You may hear Mass regularly, and yet remain out of the state of grace ; that is, out of the friendship of God. I am not now telling you how to hear Mass well ; I have tried to do so in another way, by writing some Devotions for Mass. Nor am I telling you everything that is necessary for you, as regards your souls. You may hear Mass, and yet remain in sin ; but if you do not hear

Mass, when you are bound to do so, and are able to do so, it is certain that you are in mortal sin. That is just as certain as the Being of God.

Do not delay; do not delay for a moment; make up your minds to be always regular at Mass. You see what you ought to do; ask God for the assistance of His grace, and do it at once. If you delay you may be lost. "Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation."

EASTER COMMUNION.

My friend, if you are not thinking about your Easter Communion, these words are meant for you.

It is a very sad thing, and a very miserable thing, that there are so many persons who are not afraid to offend God by mortal sin. In overcoming themselves, in resisting temptations, in facing the world, they are cowards : with a cowardice that is meaner and more pitiable than I can say. But, as regards God, they are hardened and reckless, with an effrontery and insolence also beyond all words.

A time comes to them, when their mock-courage forsakes them, and they are overwhelmed with fear.

Death lays his cold hand on them, and brings them face to face with the terrors of the world to come ; God is far nearer than they thought ; and in judgment He is far more terrible. At

last they have learnt what they might have learnt, and ought to have learnt, long before : “ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Then with this great fear hanging over them, what good resolutions they make, and how many things they promise to God ! You believe from their words, that if they are spared they will lead almost the lives of Saints. God does spare them in His mercy : they are restored to health ; and they think no more of Him than they thought before. Of every person who does this, our Lord says : “ The last state of that man becometh worse than the first.” And St Peter says : “ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back.”

Have you never made good resolutions and failed in keeping them ? Have you not promised something to God, either in health or sickness, and then broken your promise, almost as soon as it was made ?

Take, for instance, your Easter Communion. Have you never missed it ? Are you forgetting it now ? You are, as you well know, bound under pain of mortal sin to confess your sins,

once a year at least, and to receive the Holy Communion at Easter, or thereabouts.

The time appointed here, for the fulfilment of this duty, is from Ash Wednesday to the Sunday after Easter, both days included. Sometimes a little longer time may be given ; sometimes a little less.

There are few things more sad, than to know what numbers every year miss their Easter duty. Every one knows this commandment of the Church, and yet thousands break it. The voice of God calls them : they hear that voice, and refuse to listen ; or they listen for a while, and then refuse to obey. As Isaias says ; “ The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib ; but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood.”

Let me set before you, very plainly, the blessings that you put away ; and the evil that you bring upon yourself by this wilful neglect.

I. “ There is a fountain open to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner.” That fountain is the Precious Blood in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His Blood is the stream in which we can wash our raiment, and make it white and clean.

That stream, bright and cleansing, goes forth to the four winds of Heaven. And every soul, to which it comes, is made alive with the life of grace. Mary's eyes brighten, as she sees it flowing, and the hearts of elect Saints and Angels are lifted up with a great joy. It comes to us laden with blessings: "blessings of Heaven above and blessings of the deep that lieth beneath." If we are washed in it, and made clean, we have in our souls the beginning of eternal life. We are then children of God, and brethren of Jesus Christ. We dwell in the New Jerusalem, and are "fellow-citizens with the Saints," in the house of faith and love. We are in "the Church of the first-born, who are written in the heavens," and are on Mount Zion, "in the City of the Living God." Try to understand what a blessing that is.

The precept of which I am speaking regards Easter Communion: but you go to Confession, before you receive our Lord, and therefore I am now also speaking of the Sacrament of Penance. If you are ever conscious of mortal sin, you should hasten to your Confession, with as little delay as possible. Do not let the thick darkness, numbing and killing, lie upon you one moment

longer than you can help. If you are conscious of venial sins, the love of our Lord would also lead you to confess those sins quickly ; but I do not now dwell upon this. If you neglect your Confession, with mortal sin on your soul, then in the terrible words of Holy Scripture, you tread under foot the Son of God ; you despise the Blood of the Testament, by which you have been sanctified ; and sin grievously against the Spirit of Grace. This is the evil which you bring on yourselves with regard to the Precious Blood of Jesus, and with regard to the Holy Ghost.

II. Jesus Christ "is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven ; that if a man eat of it he may not die." He says of Himself : "I am the living Bread, which came down from Heaven." Again He adds : "He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abideth in Me : and I in him." He says also : "The Bread that I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world." You remember how in another place He says distinctly of the Blessed Sacrament : "This is my Body," "This is my Blood." When therefore you receive the Holy Communion, you receive Jesus Christ. The same Human Soul and Body, which are at the right hand of God in

heaven, are also in the Blessed Sacrament. They are not only human but divine, because personally united to the Word. He says, "The words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and Life." He is Himself the Word of God, and is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, is the blessing that you receive at the Altar. Since even as man He is God, what blessing can be greater? For the same reason, what greater loss can you have than to be without Him, through your own fault? But if you do not go to Communion at Easter (during the time appointed), you not only do not receive Jesus Christ; but you commit mortal sin. This is another evil, which you bring on yourself.

I beseech you therefore to make up your mind to receive your Easter Communion. Having made up your mind, do not go back. If you go on hesitating and delaying, the hour of death may find you unprepared. You cannot tell how soon you may come to that night, in which no man can work. But now God is waiting to be gracious: "I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: return ye and live."

The great feast of the Eternal King is always

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ready. He invites you to His Altar. He says, "Come eat My Bread, and drink the Wine I have mingled for you." When God invites you to His Table, can you turn away? Dare you commit mortal sin, by neglecting your Easter Communion?

THE NAME OF JESUS.

THERE are sweet names, and beautiful names in this world ; names that stir our hearts and fill us with thoughts of joy, whether we hear them or say them : but there is no name so sweet and so thrilling, no name which so stirs our hearts with love, and so dims our eyes with tears, as the Name of Jesus. Holy and venerable, full of tenderness and majesty, full of generosity and pity, bright with the brightest light of Heaven, that Name is written on our hearts in imperishable letters. It is what it is to us because it sets before us our Lord, in Himself and in His work, what He is and what He has done.

I. "Thou shalt call His Name, Jesus ; for He shall save His people from their sins." Here is the meaning of it all. He brings His people from slavery and from the prisons of the oppressor. He breaks in pieces the sceptre of

that gloomy tyrant who rules in the house of bondage and keeps men in the servitude of sin. As Josue led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, so the true Josue, that is, Jesus, leads the children of Israel from the desert of this world, through the river of judgment, into the Heavenly Promised Land, the Land flowing with milk and honey, where stands the New Jerusalem, the City of Vision, the City of Peace. He was baptized with His terrible Baptism of Blood that we might be saved from the land of darkness that "is covered with the mist of death;" the "land of misery and darkness where the shadow of death and no order but everlasting horror dwelleth." His day was "a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds," that for us there might be the light of His great Kingdom, and the Day on which no night can ever fall. He went on His way weeping that He might return with joy and bring His sheaves with Him, in the great Harvest-home of the eternal age.

II. This is what He did for us: and how did He do it? Rama and Egypt and Gethsemani

and Calvary and the Garden Tomb, give the answer to this question. A lonely Wanderer, weary and hungry and thirsty, went up and down the world, seeking for the lost, gathering them into His love, carrying them in His Arms, bringing them into His Home. A Face so venerable, so careworn, so full of love as His, had never been seen amongst men. A presence so majestic and yet so tender had never before sent a thrill through human hearts. He seems to look into all faces with a wistful, pleading look, a look of Divine compassion and Divine tenderness and inexpressible love. And still He says to each, "I am a houseless Wanderer in this great City ; will you give Me a shelter for the night ? The storm is breaking upon Me and the darkness covers Me and a burning agony dries My Heart up with thirst, will you be to Me a hiding place from the storm ? Will you be to Me as a river of water, as a covert from the whirlwind and rain ?" Thus pleadingly He speaks, as He looks into each face, and goes on His weary way " despised and rejected of men." And the shelter that He seeks is the love of His creatures ; and the water for which He asks, that His parching thirst may be quenched, is

that He may be received into their souls. But, as he goes, His royal way is strewn with flints and is wet with blood. When you look at Him you see that He carries a cross and is crowned with a Crown of thorns. Who is this? How can I ask? It is Jesus. That is all that I can say. How am I to describe Him in His work of redemption; in His great conflict with the powers of darkness? I know of no words that tell us of His warfare and His victory with such strength, sweetness, and majesty, as those burning words of His great Prophet, and those burning words too of His beloved Apostle and Evangelist; words that sweep over our souls, stirring them to their inmost depths, every time that we hear them or read them or say them to ourselves; words that seem ever to thrill through us with new power, bowing us down before our loving Jesus as in sorrow or in triumph He goes on His victorious way; "Who is This that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this Beautiful One in His robe, walking in the greatness of His strength? I that speak justice, and am a Defender to save. Why then is Thine apparel red and Thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-

press? I have trodden the Wine-press alone; and of the Gentiles there is not a man with Me; I have trampled on them in My indignation, and have trodden them down in My wrath, and their blood is sprinkled on My garments, and I have stained all My apparel. For the day of vengeance is in My Heart, and the year of My redemption has come." "These that are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they? And I said to him: My Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the Throne of God, and they serve Him, day and night, in His Temple. And He that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell over them. They shall no more hunger nor thirst; neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the Throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

III. Jesus therefore is to us, as St Bernard says, Light, Medicine, and Food. He is the Light that shone on the darkness of the world,

that shines still on its darkness and on ours. He hath called us “out of darkness into His marvellous light,” and “hath destroyed death, and hath brought to light life and incorruption by the Gospel.” He healeth all the sicknesses of our souls : “The Lord buildeth up Jerusalem ; He will gather together the dispersed of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds.” And He gives Himself to us as our Food, as the incorruptible Seed of the Resurrection. With Him we can suffer neither hunger nor thirst, nor can the sun strike on us nor any heat, for He Who is merciful is our Shepherd. “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I Myself will seek My sheep, and will visit them. As the shepherd visiteth his flock, in the day when he shall be in the midst of his sheep that were scattered, so will I visit My sheep, and will bring them out of all places, where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.” “I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures ; and their pastures shall be in the high mountains of Israel ; there shall they rest on the green grass, and be fed in fruitful pastures, upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed My sheep ; and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God.”

Blessed therefore for ever be this sweet and holy and saving Name, Jesus. "Thy name is as Oil poured out." It tells us of our Redemption and the many Mansions that are being prepared for us in Heaven. It tells us of the patience and long-suffering of God, of all His love and gentleness, the miracles of His Hand, and the gifts of His grace. It tells us of our ingratitude and His goodness, of our sin and His mercy, of our darkness and His light. This is the "Name which is above every name." "There is no other name under Heaven, given unto men, whereby we must be saved." This Name sets before you the Divine Infancy, the Egyptian exile, the Hidden Life, the Three Years' Ministry, the Passion, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Blessed Sacrament. It sets before you the majesty of the Church, the watchfulness of the Vicar of Christ, the love of the Angels, the love of the Saints, the all-enfolding love of Mary's immaculate Heart. If you have a great love for the Precious Blood and Sacred Heart and Five Sacred Wounds, here you find them all. Deliverance from eternal death and from sin, victory over temptations, consolation in all

sorrow, a refuge in all dangers, the crowns and palms and harps of the sinless world, the light and love and joy of the Beatific Vision, the Beauty of the Face of God ; all these are summed up for you in this sweetest of names, Jesus.

THE SACRED HEART.

THERE is something inexpressibly tender, inexpressibly consoling, inexpressibly constraining, in the very thought of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As, in created things, the head represents knowledge, and is the seat of wisdom : so the heart represents kindness and affection, and is the seat of love. In the Sacred Heart, we enter that great Temple, bright and glorious, in which perfect human love and perfect Divine Love have met together. Here is the highest union of God with His own creation. “Mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed. Truth hath sprung out of the earth ; and justice hath looked down from Heaven.”

The Uncreated God has now a created human Heart, and loves, not only infinitely, but also with a created human love. The Sacred Heart is the storehouse of that love. From it come

the abundance of the Divine gifts and the plenteousness of the Divine treasures ; and into it the great Harvest of God is gathered, when the Divine Reaper goes down, with His sickle, into the whitened fields. It has neither speech, nor language ; but its voice is clearly heard. That Voice is very sweet, very strong, very pathetic, very majestic, "as the sound of many waters." More deeply than any other voice, it sinks into men's hearts. With a great love, with a great strength of attractiveness, it draws them upward to God.

I. The Sacred Heart is Divine. It is to be worshipped with supreme worship, and it is to be loved with supreme love. Whatever honour we give to God, the same honour we give to It. As we "glorify God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," so we glorify that Heart, "full of grace and truth," which is most truly the Heart of God. "The Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations," claims for Himself no other homage, than that which He desires to see paid to the created Heart of His Son. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." When we adore the Sacred Heart, we adore the

Heart of Him who “sitteth on the throne,” the Heart of Him Who “liveth for ever and ever.”

II. The Heart of Jesus reveals to us the Heart of God. In its gentle and patient love, in its attractive and constraining love, in its thoughtful and ever-watchful love, it tells us of Him, who long ago, on Mount Sinai, “in a cloud,” passed before His servant; to Whom that servant thus bore witness: “O the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, patient and of much compassion, and true; Who keepest mercy unto thousands, Who takest away iniquity and wickedness and sin.” As we have “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ;” so, in the Heart of the same Divine Jesus, we have the light of the knowledge of His love. Thus Jesus reveals God to us, shows us His light in the darkness, enables us to take hold of His Hand, makes us see the light of His Face. He says so Himself in those very wonderful words, which we can never altogether understand here: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me. If you had known Me, you would without doubt have known My Father

also ; and from henceforth you shall know Him, and you have seen Him." Again : " He that seeth Me seeth the Father also." St Paul says : " The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made ; His eternal Power also and Divinity." In the highest, fullest, truest sense, these words tell us of the Sacred Heart of our Lord. That created Heart is not only perfectly human, but it is also perfectly Divine ; and by it we know the Power, the Wisdom, the Goodness of God, Who is eternal.

III. The Sacred Heart is to us the channel of the uncreated charity of God. It is a Fountain very deep, very wide, very clear, from which the waters flow "with a strong stream." By it, and with it, and through it, our Father, Who is in Heaven, gives to us those "unsearchable riches of Christ," which without it He could not give. "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us ; because God hath sent His Only-begotten Son into the world that we may live by Him." He hath "loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins." "God so loved the world as to give His Only-begotten

Son ; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life." This is the great charity of God. This is the infinite charity of that uncreated Heart, which broods with a Divine love over all its works, and longs with a Divine longing for the salvation of souls. Surely, all hearts, as the heart of one man, ought to be drawn to Him, by these "cords of Adam," and these "bands of love." It is His love, unbought and undeserved, that draws us; that strong undying love, which brought Him to Nazareth and Bethlehem, to Egypt and the great temples of the idols ; that deathless ever-burning love, which drew Him irresistibly to the Pillar of the scourging and the Way of sorrows, to Gethsemani and His blood-stained Cross. The Apostle says: "Not as though we had loved God ; but because He hath first loved us." This is the great charity of God in Christ; that charity, "which surpasseth knowledge," in its "breadth and length and height and depth."

IV. The Sacred Heart, in its sorrow, sets clearly before us our Lord's suffering, and His rejection by men. He was "despised, and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows, and

acquainted with infirmity." In the sorrow of the Heart of Jesus, His painful journeys and weariness of body, His hunger and thirst, His loneliness and anguish of soul and Divine Agony are all brought before us. We can look into His divinely pitiful Eyes; we can hear the sound of His divinely mournful Voice. Gethsemani, with its olive trees, rises up before us; and the Pillar of the scourging, and the sorrowful Way. His Head before our very eyes is pierced with its Crown of thorns. The Five Sacred Wounds, upon His Body, stand forth bright monuments of a world's transgression; still brighter memorials of a deathless love, of a Divine thirst, and the Agony of a Divine Heart. The defilements of sin seem to be covering the sinless Victim. They cling round Him, like fire; and wither and scorch and burn up His Sacred Heart. In that great Expiation He faints beneath the overpowering weight, and cries out that His Father has forsaken Him. No one but Himself can understand the Agony, intense and burning, which He endured, when He made Satisfaction for our sins; no one but Himself can know in the least, or understand in the least, the great Dereliction, when He went down into

the horror of the darkness, and sounded the uttermost depths of all the shrinking agony in which souls can be steeped. Dear Jesus, loving Jesus, suffering Lord, crucified Saviour, it seems strange that we can ever think of all this terrible agony, except on our knees, and with tears.

With all our strength, then, let us try to grow, day by day, in devotion to the Sacred Heart. That Heart is a very Sea of love and light, and graciousness and glory. It is now in Heaven and in the Blessed Sacrament ; beating with the pulses of a divinely human life ; throbbing with divinely human love. It is the glorified Heart of the Incarnate Word. Isaias must have been ever looking forward to this : “ There shall be a Tabernacle for a shade in the day time from the heat, and for a place of shelter, and for a covert from the whirlwind, and from rain.” “ Behold a King shall reign in justice. And a man shall be as when one is hidden from the wind and hideth himself from a storm ; as rivers of water in drought, and the Shadow of a Rock, that standeth out in a desert land.”

Always, therefore, let us hasten, with great love, great reverence, great gladness, to the Sacred Heart of our Lord. It will be to us a

shelter from every sorrow, and a refuge from every storm; it will be to us "a cloud by day," and "the brightness of a flaming fire in the night;" it will forgive our sins, and heal our sorrows, and give us strength for the desert-way; and, at the last, it will be to us a tower of protection against the assaults of our spiritual enemies, and the shining of a great light in the darkness of our lonely way through the valley of the shadow of death.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy upon us!

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

LOVE of the Sacred Heart and love of the Precious Blood go hand in hand. And both spring from love of the Word Incarnate, and a knowledge of all that He has done and suffered for us.

As it is impossible to love our Lord without having a great devotion to His Sacred Heart, so it is impossible to love Him without having a great devotion to His Precious Blood. If we love Him "according to knowledge," I think that each devotion will be of the same strength. But though they may be equally strong, yet they are somewhat different. Devotion to the Sacred Heart seems to me a worship of gratitude and love ; whilst devotion to the Precious Blood seems to me a worship of gratitude and joy. Our Lord loves us with His Sacred Heart, but He has redeemed us with His Precious Blood.

I. Like the Sacred Heart, the Precious Blood

is Divine. In the most absolute reality it is the Blood of God. Thus the Scripture speaks of "the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own Blood." That material Blood which flows in the veins of our Lord's Body is to be worshipped with the supreme worship that belongs to God. It is true and real Blood now though it is glorified in Heaven. It is true and real Blood now, where it is flowing through His Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament. The Sacred Humanity is personally united to the Word, so that even its actions are Divine. There is nothing figurative about this: we worship with supreme worship our Lord's Heart of Flesh and the Blood flowing through His veins. And in our hearts and souls that Blood is to us evermore "a River of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the Throne of God and of the Lamb."

II. We have been redeemed by this Blood. It has brought us into the light and rest of the Heavenly Kingdom, from "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and whirlwinds." It brings to us the fragrance of the Paradise of God, and the fruitfulness of the streams of Eden. It quenches the burning darts

of temptations, and takes off from us the grave-clothes of sin. It has ever upon it the “countless smile” of the River of the water of life. It goes forth to the four winds of Heaven, that the Elect may be sealed and gathered to the City of the living God, having “washed their robes,” having “made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.” Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Friend, “hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own Blood.” “Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God, in Thy Blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

III. Our very smallest sins can only be washed away by the Blood of Jesus. There were countless ways in which God, Who is almighty, could have redeemed us, if He had chosen to do so. But, out of all possible ways, there is one which has seemed good to Him, in His Wisdom and Love and Justice. That way is the way of the Precious Blood. Therefore, since God has so decreed, it is true that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission” of sin. We “who some time were afar off are made nigh by the Blood of Christ.” God has given us grace and spiritual life “in His Beloved Son : in Whom we have redemption through His Blood, the remis-

sion of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

IV. But, as the Precious Blood is necessary for the forgiveness of the smallest sin, so it is sufficient for the forgiveness of the greatest : "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool." "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Just ; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." "The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." No human words can fall so strongly and so sweetly on our ears and our hearts, as these words of the Spirit of God. No words of men or Angels could ever teach us so much about the power of the Precious Blood. By It, the darkest and most terrible sins, heaped up through long years, are washed away, and the soul is made white and clean. We may have been grieving God for long years, sinning against warnings, sinning without resistance, sinning in the light ; we may, through those dreary years, have been wasting

the precious hours, wasting the still more precious grace, all the time trifling in daring hardihood with God : then we rise and go to our Father ; we confess our sins, and mourn over them in the bitterness of our souls ; and, almost before we know it, the Blood of Jesus has washed us, and the grace of Jesus has saved us, and the light of Jesus has filled our hearts, shining in them, as the sun shineth in his strength. One moment, the soul is the prisoner of Satan, bound hand and foot in the chains of its sin, in the grave-clothes of its death, dark and dead, because it is without God and without Christ : the next moment it comes within reach of the Blood of Jesus ; its fetters fall off, and the light of day pierces its darkness ; it is justified, quickened, gifted with new life, brought from the power of the devil and the darkness of the land of death, into "the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free," the Home of our Heavenly Father, and "the Kingdom of the Son of His love." This is the triumph of Divine grace ; this is the great victory of redeeming Love ; this is the splendour of the great miracle of the Precious Blood. What miracle worked before the eyes of men can be compared with this ? And all these

wonders, passing speech, passing thought, passing even the thought of the Angels, come from the virtue of the Blood of Jesus.

Once, the “beautiful One in His robe walking in the greatness of His strength” came “from Edom, with His dyed garments from Bosra.” His apparel was stained, and blood was sprinkled on His raiment. Now, the name of God on the foreheads of the Elect is written with the Precious Blood. Even on earth, in this Egypt, the destroying angel passes by those who are thus signed and sealed. They only “have a right to the tree of life,” who “wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb.” For this they are kept; by this they are saved. The Angel who came “from the rising of the sun, having the sign of the Living God,” says, “Hurt not the earth nor the sea nor the trees, till we sign the servants of our God in their foreheads.”

Bright, glorious, lifegiving, the Precious Blood is now flowing through the veins of the King on His Throne. It comes ever from the Fountain of the Sacred Heart. Back to that Heart it ever returns. Bright, gracious, lifegiving, the Precious Blood is flowing over the world in a ceaseless stream from the rising to the setting of the sun.

In its mystical flowing it is the stream from the Throne of God. It is adored and loved by Mary, by Saints, by Angels. It is adored and thirsted for by men on earth and souls in Purgatory. Brighter than diamonds, more precious than gold, it is "the stream of the River," which fills the Temple of God with joy, and makes glad the City of the King.

We pray Thee, therefore, Jesus, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.

THE FIVE SACRED WOUNDS.

WHEN we think of the dreadful Agony that our Lord endured on the Cross, we cannot help having a very strong and tender devotion to His Five Sacred Wounds. For those Wounds tell us of that thirst for our Salvation which could only be slaked in death ; of the unconquerable love that sought us in the land of darkness and won us from the stronghold of the destroyer ; of that burning love of the Sacred Heart, which took Jesus into the darkness of His desolation, and the fearful Agony of His death. They tell us also of His terrible bodily pain ; of His Sacred Heart, still in death, opened by the spear ; and of the shedding of His Precious Blood.

As the love of the Sacred Heart and the value of the Precious Blood rise more and more upon our souls ; as we come to know more and more of Jesus, in His Power and Love and

Wisdom, and knowing more of Him to love Him better; so the Five Sacred Wounds seem to us to be filled with greater and richer treasures, and to shine on us with a deeper and broader glory. Most lovingly, most attractively, in their silent plaintiveness, they draw us to Him, Who once for us was lifted up on the Cross; Who now also is lifted up for us on His Throne in Heaven, and in the Blessed Sacrament. There never has been, never can be, anything one thousandth part so sweetly and intensely pathetic as the Sorrows and Sufferings of Jesus. We find the record of that suffering in the Five Sacred Wounds. "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains."

I. There was an hour when Jesus was nailed to His Cross. Nearly two thousand years ago, on a Friday morning, outside the walls of Jerusalem, He was fastened to a Cross made of wood, by nails through His Hands and Feet. Wicked and cruel men took long nails, and with hammers they drove them through those Divine Hands and Feet into the hard wood. Then the Cross was lifted up, and the Son of God was left hanging, with the whole weight of

His Body, from the nails. We shudder when we think of it. "What are these Wounds in the midst of Thy Hands?" "With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved Me."

II. Through the gate of death the Sacred Body escaped from its Agony; from that pain and Agony which, but for Divine support, would have been utterly unendurable to flesh and blood. Then the Sacred Heart, the very Holy of Holies, was pierced by the centurion's lance. Then "the abomination of desolation" stood "in the holy place." Then came the great unparalleled sacrilege of all eternity, and the innermost sanctuary of Divine Love was desecrated. And though the Body of Jesus could suffer no more, yet His Soul saw the desecration of the Body which it loved. That wound also pierced with intense anguish the sinless heart of Mary. She knew how to reverence and love that Sacred Body of God; and her suffering therefore was intense, according to her love and knowledge and reverence. Most bitter and acute pain also, because of that wound, went through the hearts of John and Magdalen, as they stood with Mary beneath the cross. St

John had lain upon that very Heart of Jesus, and had heard its beating on the night of the Passion ; and Magdalen, full of love and sorrow, had a little while before washed those very Feet of Jesus with her tears and dried them with the hair of her head. They had learnt to love Jesus ; and now, when the lance pierces His Sacred Heart, their love is the measure of their grief. Their hearts seem to die utterly within them, when they think of this desecration of the Heart of their crucified Love.

III. Taken down from the Cross, and wrapped in fine linen, white and clean, the Body of Jesus is laid in the new rock-hewn Sepulchre. That Divine Body is still covered with bruises, and with the marks of fearful blows. The Divine Back is still torn to pieces and ploughed into furrows by the terrible scourges. The Divine Head and Temples are torn and pierced by the long sharp thorns of the Crown, which the world has been platting for four thousand years. In His Hands and Feet there are the prints of the nails.

IV. But He was “free amongst the dead ;” the grave could not hold Him ; the chains of death fell from Him, “like threads of webs ;”

and He rose in strength and beauty. All marks of His suffering and shame were gone, except only the Five Sacred Wounds. As the sea, in its flowing, washes all footprints from the sand, so the sea of glory that swept over the Sacred Heart, in the majesty and brightness of the Resurrection, washed away all the footprints of the destroyer, except those Five Marks, of redemption for us and Agony for Himself, which in His Love and Wisdom He chooses to bear for ever on His Hands and Feet and Side ; even now, when He is enthroned in the midst of His Kingdom ; even now, when the Beauty of His Face lights up the world of the ransomed Saints. With a lingering love He looked back upon His Sufferings, and could not bear to part with these marks of His Cross and Passion.

V. At this moment, in Heaven and in the Blessed Sacrament, these Five Sacred Wounds are shining with the brightness of an unchanging Day. They enlighten the Heavenly City, and flood with a golden glory the faces of the Redeemed. The crowned Intelligences of the Kingdom of God see them and adore. There is, "in the midst of the Throne and of the four

living Creatures and in the midst of the Ancients, a Lamb standing as it were Slain."

At the right Hand of God, receiving the homage of creation, stands Jesus, the Son of Man, once Dead, now Alive for evermore, with Five Marks ever seen on His Divine Body. With Him are His Elect, gathered from the four winds of Heaven. Myriads praise Him for the great Redemption that He wrought. He is in the Blessed Sacrament as in Heaven: thus on the Altar, and in the Tabernacle, in the midst of us, He abides with His Five Sacred Wounds, shining like five suns through the darkness and the mist and the storm.

We ought therefore always to adore these Wounds on the Body of our Lord, thanking Him with all our hearts for His sufferings which He endured for us.

"I beheld; and I heard the voice of many Angels round about the Throne and the living Creatures and the Ancients; and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was Slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing. And every creature" in Heaven, on earth, under

the earth, and in the sea, "I heard saying : To Him that sitteth on the Throne and to the Lamb, be blessing and honour and glory and power for ever and ever."

MARY.

WITH great love, great reverence, great devotion, Mary is enshrined in the hearts of the faithful. She has made a home for herself, in the love of her children ; and reigns there in her sweet, sinless sovereignty, a Virgin-Mother and Queen. Her Throne is also set up in Heaven, at the right Hand of the King. And whether on earth or in Heaven no throne of any creature is half so glorious as hers. No glory of any creature is like hers, because no love is like hers. She is the noblest and most wonderful work of redeeming grace, in the great Kingdom of our Lord. The brightness of her Throne irradiates that sinless Kingdom, and makes it glad. After the joy of loving God, the Blessed Trinity, and Jesus Christ, who was sent, there is no joy like the joy of loving Mary. God is the Creator of all things : and very wonderful He is indeed in all His works. His greatest work is the Sacred

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Humanity of Jesus ; after that come the Immaculate Soul and Heart of Mary, more wonderful, more beautiful, more glorious, than all His other works.

I should be very thankful, if I could get any one to love Mary a little more, even if it should be ever so little more, than he has been loving her. The reward is very great. For the love of Mary, though only a means to an end, is in itself very blessed. But what shall I say of the love of God, uncreated and eternal : to which it leads ? And every increase of love for Mary brings with it, unfailingly, increase of love for Him. She has also the great gift of making persons spiritual, and leading them into the most secret and untrodden places of Divine love, where are the greatest treasures of "the unsearchable riches of Christ." She can tell us of the Fountain of Gardens, and the Fruits of the Orchard, and the aromatic Spices, and the Stream from Libanus; she can tell us of the spikenard and saffron, the myrrh and aloes, the lilies and pomegranates, the palm-trees and the clusters of grapes ; she can tell us also of the bulwarks of silver and the boards of cedar, of the vineyard and the clefts of the rock and the

cellar of wine and the Shadow of the Divine Spouse.

Let us see then why we ought to love Mary.

I. We are bound not only to love God, with all our heart and soul and strength; but also to love what He loves, and hate what He hates. Because He hates sin, therefore we ought to hate sin. Because He loves all things that are true, modest, just, holy, lovely, we ought to love them. He loves all creatures, except the lost angels and lost souls, as they dwell hopeless, unloving, impenitent, hardened, in the fire which can never be quenched, and in the darkness which can never pass away. But with an especial love He loves those who do His will, and seek to keep His commandments. He says expressly in the Proverbs: "I love them that love Me." The more therefore that we love Him, the more He loves us. But no Saint, no Angel, ever loved God, as "the Mother of Jesus" loved Him. Her love was indeed His gift: but this is the excess of His goodness. He makes us, by His grace, what we are: and then He rewards us for being what He has made us. In our freedom, we must correspond with grace: yet our free will, and our power to

do this, have been given to us by Him. It is said in the Canticle of Canticles, "the righteous love Thee :" and the Angel Gabriel said to Mary, "Hail, full of grace : the Lord is with thee." Her grace was beyond all other grace, ever given to creatures ; her justice, beyond all other justice ; her love, beyond all other love. For this reason she ought to be dearer to us than all creatures : dearer to us even than all creatures taken together.

II. We are bound greatly to love our Lord Jesus Christ, who came down from Heaven to save us from sin and death. "Greater love than this, no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Having loved us as God, "with an everlasting love," He loved us as man, so as to give Himself for us on the Cross. He says, "With great mercies will I gather thee." And again, "With everlasting kindness have I had mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer." No words can tell the greatness of the love of Jesus. Many waters cannot quench it : neither can the floods drown it." Wonderful is the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for all : but still more wonderful is the love of that Heart for Mary. He is our Divine Saviour ; and she is

His Virgin-Mother, and the first of His redeemed, His most chosen One, redeemed in the most perfect way, and by the fullest redemption. Our love, therefore, for her should be according to His love for her : and also according to our love for Him. Again, the more that any souls love Jesus, the more we should love those souls : but who has ever loved Him, as Mary loved Him ? What love for Jesus has ever been like that fire of love, bright, pure, deathless, that filled the heart of our sinless Queen ? Her love for Him, then, is another reason for our devotion to her.

III. Observe one thing more about our Blessed Lady. You cannot rightly believe the mystery of the Incarnation, unless you think rightly of her. She is an integral part of the revelation of God. They who begin by denying the honour due to Mary, according to the ordinance and decree of God, always end, sooner or later, by denying the honour that is due to her Son. On the other hand, they who keep the faith, as regards Mary, always keep the faith, concerning our Lord's Divine and Human Natures, His Divine Person and Actions, His Sacred Heart, and Precious Blood. For instance, no one can

believe, with true faith, the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, unless he gives to Mary the title of Mother of God. If he deny her this name of honour, he denies the Son, and dissolves Jesus, making Him out to be two persons; whereas, being both God and Man, and so having two Natures, one Divine and one Human, He is only one Divine Person. He therefore in reality denies that our Lord is the Christ, and denies also that He is come in the flesh. Of such St John says, "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is anti-christ, who denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." And also: "Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is of God: and every spirit, that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God."

Therefore for the sake of God and Jesus, with very great love let us keep Mary in our hearts. Her graciousness and watchful care will be to us far more than we can think. The more that unbelievers despise her and reject her, the more we must love and honour her. The more that the evil world casts her out, the more we must keep her in the innermost sanctuary of our

hearts. As we desire never to be ashamed of the reproach of Jesus, so let us never be ashamed of the reproach of Mary. By the grace of God she is what she is : and, when we love and reverence her, we follow in the footsteps of our Lord ; and the nearer that we are to Him here, the closer that we follow in His steps here, the more that we are conformed to His likeness here, the nearer our thrones will be to His Throne, in the Kingdom of the Resurrection ; and the more we shall see of the Glory of Mary, as she lies, crowned with her diadem of twelve stars, on the Sacred Heart of the King.

THE IMMACULATE HEART.

DEVOTION to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a necessary consequence of love for our Lady ; just as devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a necessary consequence of love for our Lord.

We love Jesus for His own sake, because He lived for us, suffered for us, died for us ; and therefore we have a great devotion to His Sacred Human Heart, which is the instrument and symbol, the pledge and the fountain, of His love.

We love Mary for His sake, because it is impossible to love Him rightly without loving her ; and therefore we have a great devotion to her Sinless Heart, with which she loves us and Jesus and God.

As the moon shines with light borrowed from the sun, so the Heart of Mary shines with light from the Heart of Jesus. We are made in “the likeness of God,” in God’s “own image.” Our moral and spiritual perfection consists in our

likeness to Him. And doubtless our bodily perfection also is connected with our likeness to the Incarnate Word. One day He will come again as Man to judge the world ; and "we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is." Of all creatures our Lady is most like Him. There is nothing so like the Heart of Jesus, as the Heart of Mary. In that Heart indeed is "the image of the Heavenly."

Now the subject about which I am writing is not love for our Lady, but, specially and precisely, devotion to her Sinless Heart.

I. That Heart, more truly than the Heavenly Jerusalem, is the City of "pure gold, like clear glass." There is "no night there :" for sin has never dimmed even with the faintest shadow its unsullied brightness. The full flood of light from the emerald-girdled Throne fills and encircles that spotless Heart ; that Heart which once, like a silver star, shone here above the great sea of sorrows ; which now, like a splendour of seven days, shines in Heaven above the great sea of glory and of love. The crystal purity of Mary's Heart is for ever a joy to sceptred Saints and Angels, as they stand before

the Throne of God. By the free grace of God, and the power of Jesus her Divine Son, she has been saved from sin. With His strong Hands He has lifted us from the shadow of death, one by one, "as a brand plucked out of the fire." With the same strong Hands, once pierced on the Cross, He saved Mary from ever falling into that fire of sin, which is so terrible and so full of woe. He is her Saviour as He is ours, only in a different way. His Precious Blood was shed for her as for us. But "with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him plentiful redemption." So Mary was kept safely from original sin. The great dark flood stayed its waters when it came near to the ark of God. Its cold torrent, defiled and defiling, touched not even her immaculate feet. She passed over, sinless and undefiled. She was also free from the very smallest actual sin, through her perfect correspondence with grace. Whatever she had to do, she did always in the most perfect way. Thus her Heart in its sinlessness is ever "leaning on her Beloved," that is, on Jesus Who sustains her.

II. Think of the love, strong and changeless, with which the Heart of Mary now loves God in the Beatific Vision. Once in the world she loved

Him with an ever-increasing love far beyond all the love of creatures; but now in Heaven that love can change no more. Purer, brighter, stronger, than the love of Seraphim, of Cherubim, of Thrones, her love, unwavering, undimmed, lights up the Heavenly palaces, and clings round the Heart of God. It is the sweetest fragrance in that fadeless garden of the King. Only in a breathless tearful silence can we think of this. That love is the most perfect shadow of the love with which Jesus loves His Eternal Father. The more that we understand this great love of Mary, the more intensely beautiful she seems. For the measure of a creature's beauty is the measure of its love for God. And before Mary's beauty the splendour of the radiant Angels and golden-crowned Redeemer grows dim.

III. Next there rises on our souls the love of the Immaculate Heart for the Heart of Jesus. Whatever the Sacred Heart is to us, far more is It to Mary: whatever It has done for us, far more It has done for her. If we, even here in this darkness, love that Sacred Heart with a love which no streams of blood can quench, which the evil world cannot take away, which our own wavering hearts, so weak and so dark, cannot

destroy, what must be the love of Mary for that once stricken Heart of Jesus, now when she is ever lying upon It, crowned and at rest, in the sinless Kingdom, in the light of the Day, in the world of the Ransomed, who have passed through the great deep, and have entered with singing and gladness into the fulness of their rest. No Saint, no Angel, no Apostle, no Evangelist, could tell us of that love.

IV. Then there is the love of the Heart of Mary for us. We are her children, and she is our Mother, though her glory passes all our words and thoughts. In that glory she does not forget us ; nay, I ought rather to say that because of the sweetness of her home she thinks of us all the more. As we go onward through sorrows and trials and temptations and sins ; as we faint and tremble on the way ; as we fall because of our weakness, or the burden of our Cross ; she remembers our necessities, and with an untold pity bears us on her Heart. First and purest, sweetest and brightest, in the Kingdom of Jesus, she prays for us unceasingly. Her power is in her prayers. She cannot of herself give us what we need : our Lord can do so, for He is God ; but it is His will that she should pray

for us ; and she does pray for us, in her sweet all-prevailing intercession, day and night.

The prayers of those who love God here have great power, but far more prevailing are the prayers of the Saints in Heaven. As the Angel stands before the Altar with his golden thurible, their prayers rise from it to God. But what are these prayers to the prayers of Mary ? What is the whole intercession of the Kingdom of the Blessed, to one prayer of Mary's Immaculate Heart ? In the midst of the Saints and Angels as their Queen, she is close to the Heart of Jesus ; and there she offers her prayers to Him, with a love far purer, far stronger, than the love of the Saints, or the love of the angelic Choirs.

Very beautiful and very gracious therefore is our Mother Mary, as she lifts up her pure hands to God for all who are here in warfare, and for the Holy suffering Souls in Purgatory. The love of her Immaculate Heart overshadows and glorifies the Church. It overshadows and purifies the darkest souls ; overshadows and comforts the most desolate souls ; overshadows and strengthens the weakest souls ; overshadows and calls the most wandering souls ; overshadows and enlightens the blindest souls ;

that are to be found any where in the great Kingdom, where the Elect are working out their salvation ; where all are being proved ; and where the tares must grow amongst the wheat till the end. We cannot help having a great devotion to that Sinless Heart, so strong, so tender, so loving, when we know what it is and what it does ; how dear it is to Jesus ; how dear it is to God.

But there is a love far deeper, far stronger, far brighter, far more patient and watchful, even than the love of Mary : and that is the love of Jesus, Who died for us on the Cross. It is to this sanctuary of love that Mary is ever seeking to lead us, as we follow with unequal steps, taking hold of her Immaculate hand, and loving, with a great love, her Immaculate Heart.

THE SEVEN DOLOURS.

IN all darkness and sorrow, it is a blessing beyond words to be able to find a shelter from the storm in the Passion of Jesus, and to hide ourselves from the heat in the shadow of His great Agony.

After this there can be no such shelter for human hearts from sorrow or pain, as the Seven Dolours of Mary. Those Seven Sorrows stand out, in their strength and bitterness and majesty, amongst the sorrows of men, as mountains reaching up to Heaven overshadow the cities of the plain. They are only parts of one gigantic sorrow which filled and encompassed the Heart of Mary, whilst she was a wayfarer, seeking the Heavenly rest. Her sorrow was the earthly image of that Divine Sorrow, the Sorrow of God, which filled the Sacred Heart of our Lord. As a thread of silver to a great chain of gold, so is the sorrow

of the Heart of Mary to the sorrow of the Heart of Jesus.

I. Those chief sorrows of our Lady, which the Church sets specially before us, are seven.

(1.) First there came the sword that pierced her, when Simeon spoke, taking Jesus in his arms ; when the Lord, Whom men were seeking, had come suddenly to His Temple. With sharp agony that sword, like fire, pierced her heart ; never to be withdrawn, never to cease in its agony of pain, till the grave should give back its Dead, Whom then in that First Dolor as a Divine Infant she adored. “The iron pierced his soul until his word came ; the word of the Lord inflamed him.” So in the highest sense it was with Mary. The iron pierced her soul when the Word came to His Temple, and until He came back from His grave. And it was the Word of the Lord that inflamed her heart with pain and with love : for Jesus her God, Whom she loved with a fainting love, was the cause of all her suffering. Beautiful, star-crowned Queen, how is it possible then, that thou canst find any rest for the anguish of thy heart ?

(2.) Then came the massacre of the Innocents and her flight into Egypt. Mary and Joseph

with Jesus journeyed four hundred miles through the desert, amidst dreadful perils of many kinds, suffering hunger and thirst and weariness and sleeplessness and alarms from the dangers of the way. Through the wind and the rain ; through thick clouds of the drifting sand, driven by the storm and beating fiercely on them, they came to Egypt. There for many years they dwelt, in the very hot-bed of idolatrous worship, beneath the oppressive shadow of temples, built for idols and not for the Living God. And there oftentimes they suffered the extremity of hunger. Then they returned to the Holy Land, through sufferings not diminished but increased.

(3.) After some time, when Jesus was twelve years old, Mary lost Him for three days in Jerusalem. A thick darkness far worse than that of Egypt then fell upon her soul. "In the horror of a vision by night, fear seized upon me and trembling." Her "way is hidden and God hath surrounded" her "with darkness." In great "bitterness of soul" she sought for Him. "By night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth, I sought Him and found Him not :" "I called and He did not answer me." In some

L

ways, perhaps, this is the greatest of Mary's sorrows ; the most difficult to understand, and the most terrible for herself.

(4) Then many years passed away ; and there came a day, when at the corner of a street in Jerusalem Mary met Jesus carrying His Cross. He was covered with dust and blood. All the agony of the Passion was upon Him. His Divine Face was disfigured with bruises. A crown of sharp thorns was round His Head, and the blood was running down His Cheeks. His Brow and Temples were all torn with that strange Crown ; and His Hands and Shoulders were bleeding through the sharpness of His Cross. She knew also how His Hair had been plucked from Him, how He had been spit upon, how His Back had been and was then literally ploughed into long furrows, by the leaden thongs of the scourges. Was he not "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity ?" "He was as one struck by God and afflicted ;" "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins." "The arrows of the Lord are in Me, the rage whereof drinketh up My Spirit, and the terrors of the Lord war against Me." Pale, careworn, smitten, fainting, bleeding; He stood

before Mary. This was the sight that met her eyes ; this was the new sorrow that pierced her heart like a burning sword.

(5.) Soon another sorrow came, and deeper waves of fire flowed over her. She stood beneath the Cross ; and Jesus is hanging there by the nails through His Hands and Feet. The Crown of thorns is still round His Head. His tender Hands become more and more riven, as the whole weight of His Body drags on the nails. He is consumed with a most parching thirst. His Agony is a dark, boundless, unfathomable sea, and He can find no rest. Burnt up with anguish through every fibre, through every delicate nerve of His body, racked by excruciating pains, crushed and stifled by the oppressive-ness of His intense suffering, He is steeped in fire and surrounded by it. Upon Him falls the mysterious darkness of His Dereliction. Whatever that horror of a great darkness may have been, it was something so terrible that it constrained Him, even though His Human Soul, at that moment, as always, enjoyed the Beatific Vision, to cry out in agony, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." The crowds jeered Him, derided Him, blasphemed Him.

Both the thieves crucified with Him at first reviled Him. Mary saw all this and understood it, as none but herself could understand. And her wordless Sorrow, the speechless agony of her heart, as He knew it, was a greater pain to Him than all that has been said. Then there came, darker and more terrible, more loathsome and more fearful, the crushing weight of the burden that was laid on Him by the sins of the world. The sufferings of His Body, appalling as they were, cannot be compared with the sufferings of His Soul. He stood in the place of the sinner; He received the punishment of sin. In its full strength Divine Justice fell upon Him and did not spare. He suffered all that which otherwise would have come to us. As the fiery arrows of God drank up His Spirit, He lay there in the place of sinners. The burning poison of sin seemed to creep round Him, withering Him, scorching Him, hiding Him from the Face of God. The Sacred Scriptures set before us this great truth very terribly, so that we may see how our Lord stood in our stead. “Him that knew no sin, for us He made sin, that we might be made the justice of God in Him :” “God sending His Son in the likeness

of sinful flesh and of sin hath condemned sin in the flesh." "Thou hast killed, and hast not spared." O think, when you read this, that it was Jesus Who was killed, and was not spared. Never for one moment ought we to forget that our Lord bore our guilt, and that the great and overpowering Agony of His Sacred Heart on the Cross was the weight and tyranny of sin. "In His Love and in His Mercy He redeemed" us : but we see at what a cost. All this was the Fifth Dolour of our sorrowful Mother.

(6.) At last the terrible Agony came to an end. The Divine Sufferer slept, in peaceful rest, upon His hard bed : "He shall give sleep to His Beloved." Then the time came for the taking down of the Sacrifice. Beautiful and venerable in His death He hung upon the Altar, on which He had offered Himself to God. As long as the world shall last, countless souls shall find unfailing springs of refreshment and rest in the thought of this. As long as the summer and winter, the seed-time and harvest, come and go, countless myriads of souls will be drawn, by the strong attractiveness of His Passion, to the Cross of Christ : "Who are these that fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows?"

“ Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together.” That dead Body on which Mary gazes so wistfully and so lovingly is the dead Body of the Living God. Therefore with the greatest reverence those who come to help her draw out the nails from the Hands and Feet ; and lift the Divine Body down and lay it in her lap. He had lain in her arms before, but not in a way like this. There came to her strange memories of Bethlehem, mingled with this darkness of Calvary. How sweetly and how royally, in the stillness of death, He lies on her desolate Heart. A thorn from the Crown of thorns may have pierced her as He lay. She kissed His torn Forehead and His Sacred Wounds ; took off His Crown ; and helped to wrap Him in the clean white linen, and the fragrant ointments for His burial. Thus came another sword ; as the Beauty of the Dead overshadowed her. Dear, woe-stricken, desolate Mother, keep us in the likeness of our Lord’s Death, that we may be also in the likeness of His Resurrection.

(7.) But He was taken away, and laid in His Sepulchre : “ My Head is full of dew, and My locks of the drops of the nights.” “ Whither is

thy Beloved gone, O thou most beautiful among women? Whither is thy Beloved turned aside, and we will seek Him with thee?" The grave received Him in its arms; the great stone was rolled against the door; and Mary was left alone. "If I go to the East, He appeareth not." In desolation and yet in peace, in sorrow and calmness and confidence, she waited, in the house of John (O Blessed Apostle, loved so dearly by Mary, as by Jesus), through the dark hours till His coming back. Thus there came the last of her Dolours: "In six troubles He shall deliver thee; and, in the seventh, evil shall not touch thee."

II. It is impossible for us to understand this greatness of our Lady's sorrow. "How is the mistress of the Gentiles become as a widow:" "Weeping she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks:" "To what shall I compare thee? or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I equal thee that I may comfort thee, O Virgin-Daughter of Sion? For great as the sea is thy" sorrow. Indeed, the greatness of our Lady's sorrow is simply bewildering. We cannot weigh it and measure it, as we can weigh and measure the

sufferings of Confessors or Martyrs. As we stand on the sea shore, and look out on a waste of waters; as those waters seem to us to be boundless, and are in many places unfathomable; so do we look out on the deep waters of our Lady's Dolours, to which we can find no bound, and which we cannot fathom. We only know that her capacity of sorrow was according to her capacity of love. If Mary's love were equally divided amongst all Saints and Angels, it is probable that each one would have far more than he has now. And indeed it is quite possible that each one would then have more love, than they have now altogether. And for the honour of our Lord we may believe that it is so. In the same way, if Mary's sorrow had been equally divided amongst all creatures, it is probable that each one would have had to suffer more than he has suffered. And in this case also it is quite possible that each one would have suffered more than all have suffered, as it is. And though we cannot be certain of it, yet for the honour of our Lord we may believe this also. But we do know that our Lady would have died from the excess of her sorrows, over and over again, had she not been miraculously strengthened. Thus we can

get a glimpse into that darkness, in which she was so lovingly hidden ; and we can take up a few drops of the great sea of grief and suffering which filled her Sinless Heart to overflowing. Thus ever more and more her Twelve Stars come out shining through the darkness : thus ever more and more we can see, by little and little, into the hidden depths of that sea which encircled her. And, if we love her at all times, we must love her more than ever in her desolation and woe ; just as we love Jesus most of all in the darkness of His Agony and Passion.

Thus all the sorrows of the world seem to be very little when compared with the Sorrows of Mary. Unapproachable in the grandeur of her sorrow, she sits with a crown and sceptre on the shore of the vast ocean of human pain and grief. When we think of her sorrow we seem to be lost in the thought. It hangs above us, and overshadows us like a great mountain. Round about us on the plain are many little hills, some greater, some less ; but rising up in lonely majesty, girt with a purple mist and crowned with a golden glory, dimly seen, is a mountain whose head is lost in the clouds. This mountain

is the sorrow of Mary, to which no human sorrow can be compared.

But Mary teaches us about Jesus. And His Sorrow is far greater compared with hers, than hers compared with ours : for He is God. When we speak of the Sorrow of God, the words have a most sweet and plaintive sound. More than anything else, Divine Sorrow lifts us out of our nothingness to the Uncreated Heart. After her love for God, our Lady has no greater joy than in leading us to our Lord. We see in a little measure what His Sorrow must have been, when hers, so great compared with ours, is so very little compared with His. And now on His Throne He has a most especial love for those who have a great devotion to the Sorrow of His Virgin-Mother.

As we love our Lady, so her Dolours will be more and more to us. One day we shall see her with those many diadems, which have been given to her because of the sorrows through which she went. As she once was desolate, so now she is glorious. Having gone along the darkest way which any creature ever trod, she now reigns on the most glorious Throne on which any creature has been, or ever can be, set. None

ever bore so much of the weight of the Cross as she did ; and none now can have a crown of glory like hers. No one ever sorrowed with Jesus as she sorrowed with Him ; ever drank so deeply of His bitter chalice ; ever went down so far into the unsearchable depths of His Pain and Agony ; and therefore no one now is so near and so dear to Him ; no one is so filled with His Love and crowned with His Light ; so folded in His Divine Embrace, and set so closely on His Heart ; as she is, in the beauty of the deathless world, and the light of that great Kingdom which He purchased for Himself. Her Sorrow is the measure of her Glory. She is not only Mara, but Noemi ; once she was filled with bitterness more than all, and now she is covered with glory more than all, and is more beautiful than all, on the Heart of God,—the Queen of the Heavenly Kingdom of Jesus, which He won by His Agony and Passion and Cross and Sepulchre.

O Mary, Mother of Sorrow, once most afflicted and most desolate, now most comforted and most glorious, thy Heart is full of love for us thy children, in these storms and darkness, and in

this desert land ; by the remembrance of all that thou didst suffer with Jesus, pray for us, dear, blessed Virgin-Mother and Queen, now and at the hour of our death.

THE HOLY SEE.

GOD has appointed the Holy See as our safeguard against error. He has set the Vicar of His Son in the Church, to teach us infallibly what to believe and what to do.

The Church is the light of the world, because Jesus is the Light of the Church. Our Lord is the “bright and morning Star,” and His Church is in the world like the dawn of the Eternal Day. And “high and lifted up,” the earthly shadow of the “great white Throne” in Heaven, indefectible and imperishable and changeless ; above all principalities and powers and kingdoms of the earth ; in the midst of the Church, guarded by the love and prayers of the faithful, by legions of ministering Spirits, by the intercession of the redeemed Saints, and the great contemplative Hierarchy of Seraphim, and Cherubim, and Thrones ; guarded by Peter, and Paul, and Joseph, by the flashing sword of Michael, and

the sinless Heart of Mary; the Throne of the Vicar of Jesus Christ is set on the heights of the spiritual Mount Sion, which is the Roman Church; crowns the summit of that great Hill, which is all but the Hill of Vision; and “flames in the forehead of the morning sky.”

This is the great gift of God to men. Without this we must wander in darkness, ever feeling for the wall in vain; ever crying out in the misery of doubt in vain; ever losing our way and plunging hopelessly into the destroying quicksands of the world. But with this, we have no uncertainty, no doubt, no possibility of error. The Vicar of our Lord—as the head of the faithful, as the divinely-appointed teacher of the Church—never has taught, never will teach, never can teach, anything to the faithful but that which is right and true. His changeless voice wavers not, and his determined will falters not. Kingdoms, republics, empires, come and go; states carve out new boundaries for themselves, or pass away and are heard of no more; but the throne of our Lord’s Vicar is as strong and unshaken, as it was nearly two thousand years ago, and his spiritual sovereignty is still the same. It does not matter where he may be;

whether he be in Rome on His lawful throne, or an exile and a wanderer on the earth ; whether he be reigning in his ancestral home, or whether he be cast out by traitors, he is still the Head of the Church of Jesus Christ ; still the Supreme Ruler of the earth, and Supreme Sovereign in the world of conscience and of faith. They who reject him, do not reject him but Christ ; and they who receive him, receive him as an Angel of God, and are saved from the destruction and utter ruin that ever fall upon this world of sin.

Now, as the Church does not profess to be guided infallibly with reference to natural things, there is one thing which you must be careful to remember : it is not for us to draw the line where the authority of the Church ceases, and where the authority of human experiment begins. The Church herself, and only the Church, can draw that line. She is infallible, the Holy Father is infallible, on all questions of faith and morals, and on all dogmatic facts—that is, all facts that bear upon morals or faith. Logical or metaphysical doctrines may be dogmatic facts as well as anything else ; and therefore upon these, as such, an infallible judgment can always

be pronounced. But what are dogmatic facts, and what are not; what things come wholly within the region of science, and what things belong to the region of faith; where the boundary line is to be drawn, and in what attitude we have to place ourselves as to certain subjects;—these things are altogether beyond our power or our right, and are wholly within the judgment of the Apostolic See.

There is a saying among jurists that the king never dies; and it is true, though it is in the order of nature, if we mean by it that the authority of the law never ceases; for the powers “that are, are ordained of God.” But in a far higher sense this is true of the Holy Father. Peter never dies. Jesus, our Lord, never leaves His Church. The Holy Ghost teaches with the same piercing light and the same unerring Wisdom, as when He came down amongst the fires of Pentecost.

Upon Peter the Church was built: to Peter the keys were given. Pius the Ninth to us is Peter. To rule the Church; to feed the sheep; to teach the faithful without possibility of error;—these are the rights and prerogatives of Peter. None have shared them with him, but his suc-

cessors, who have lived in his house, and reigned upon his throne, and spoken with his voice, and blessed with his hands. The powers of evil are banded together with insatiate rage against the Church, but they tremble before the Seal of the Fisherman as before the Word of the Living God. Peter, in his great penitence and his great love, has a deathless life. His immortal name lives in Rome, and overshadows each Pontiff as he comes. It is Peter who binds and looses at this day. It is Peter who holds the keys which he once took from the pierced hands of his Divine Master; and who will hold those keys of life and death till the number of the Elect is fulfilled, and the last of the Redeemed enters His Father's Kingdom.

THE CHURCH.

LIKE a vision of strength and loveliness, the imperishable Church of God stands round us, as the hills stand round Jerusalem. "A City that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God," is our inheritance, even here in the darkness of the world. This great City is that Catholic Church which one day will be transfigured and glorified and made eternal in Heaven.

Strong amidst weakness, beautiful amidst deformity, indestructible amidst ruins, imperishable in a world of decay and death, infallible amidst errors and confusions without number, is this glorious Church, the Bride of Jesus, the Temple of the Living God. Amidst the mud huts and wood cabins of the evil world it stands out, indescribable in its overshadowing majesty, perfect in its symmetry, dazzling in its brightness, like a great City of which the length and the

height and the breadth are equal, a City of gold and crystal and precious stones, with walls of jasper and gates of pearl.

False religions of every kind spring up, like mushrooms, and have their day. They endure for a little while and then pass into darkness, and their place knows them no more for ever. Even as to Christian sects, only think of the great number that have risen, destroyed their followers, cursed the earth, and then gone back into the outer darkness from which they came. They wither in the sunshine, but the Church remains. Undecaying, changeless, gifted with the freshness of an eternal youth, strengthened with a strength that no storms can destroy, lighted with a glory that no darkness can dim, the Church of God is now what she was at the beginning ; is now what she will be when every eye shall see the Son of Man in the brightness of His Coming. Who can number the sects that have been, and have ceased to be ? Who can set forth the misbeliefs and unbeliefs and heresies of the sects that are round us in this day ? And who can tell the glories of the Catholic Church ? "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and know the number of the

stock of Israel?" "From the tops of the rocks I shall see him, and from the hills I shall consider him. This people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." "God is not as a man that He should lie, nor as the son of man that He should be changed. Hath He said then, and will He not do? Hath He spoken, and will He not fulfil?" In this Church of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men, and only in this Church, there is the true worship of the true God. Thus it is said of the Roman Church in which we dwell securely: "There is no idol in Jacob, neither is there an image-god to be seen in Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the sound of the victory of the King is in him." This tells us of the purity, the strength, the victoriousness, of the Church, the true Israel of God. In another way we are told of its beauty and its fruitfulness: "How beautiful are thy Tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy Tents, O Israel: they are as woody valleys, as watered gardens near the rivers, as the tabernacles which the Lord hath pitched, as cedars by the water-side." And this is the Judgment of the Holy Ghost about the friends and enemies of the Church: "He

that blesseth thee shall also himself be blessed ; but he that curseth thee shall be reckoned accursed : ” “ He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of My eye.”

Now you can never be mistaken about the Church of God. There are four notes by which you can know it, but they are all contained in one. The true Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. By these notes you may know it. But you may know it more easily still. It is Roman. The Roman Church, hated, persecuted, slandered, blasphemed, yet feared, by the dark evil world, is the Church which Jesus Christ purchased with His Blood, is the Church in which He is always reigning. And into this Church the Elect are brought : and of this Church it is said in every age : “ The Lord increased daily together such as should be saved.” They who enter the one Church enter that Ark of safety which will bear them safely over the tempestuous waters of the deluge and through the brooding darkness of the clouds to the true Mountains of Armenia, those Hills of height and magnificence, that girdle the New Jerusalem and the Paradise of God.

This Church then is unchangeable, imperish-

able, infallible. It is the Church of Him with Whom one day "is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day :" the Church of Jesus Christ Who is "yesterday and to-day and for ever the Same." It belongs to God Who is the Giver of life, in Whom "we live and move and are," Who sustains all things by the word of His power, Who cannot die as He cannot change, Who knoweth all things and cannot be mistaken and cannot deceive. And it is a Church worthy of God. In the New Creation, far more than in the old, He looks on those things that He has made and sees that they are "very good."

But you must understand clearly that there is one Church of God and only one. In choosing between the Church and sects of professing Christians, you do not choose between different Churches, all equally true, and then join yourself to that which you like best ; but you choose between the Church and disbelief ; between the beautiful work of God and the defacement of that work by Satan. God is one, and the Church is one. Evil is manifold, and the sects are countless. There is and can be only one Church, as there is only One God. That Church

is the Roman Church and no other. And this is as certain as the existence of God Who made us.

This great Truth ought to be deep and strong in your hearts. You ought to be ready to die for your religion, the one true religion which Jesus Christ revealed. As the light is to the darkness, so is the Church of Rome to the sects. As the Heavenly New Jerusalem, the City of God, is to the earthly Babylon, the city of strife and confusion, so are the beauty and majesty and strength and wisdom of the Church to the deformity and weakness of those countless forms of unbelief or disbelief which darken the earth. This Church then is the One Church of God built on Jesus Christ as the chief Corner-stone, and in Him on Peter, the first of His Vicars : "Thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts protect Jerusalem, protecting and delivering, passing over and saving." It is no question of rival claims. No other Church but the Church of Rome even claims to be built on Peter. As from a great mountain her light is poured upon the nations of the world. She

is the City set on a hill whose glory cannot be hidden. Thank God with all your souls that you dwell in the light of the Catholic Faith : and do not forget to pray for those who are wandering outside in the darkness, for those whom the night still overshadows. And the more that you love God, the more there will rise upon your souls the glory of the Roman Church ; the more you will understand all her beauty and her majesty ; how she is very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts and keeps the Faith ; how she watches over each soul, and yet spreads her arms over all the darkness and all the dreariness of the world. The greatest gift of God to man in Heaven is the Vision of Himself; the greatest gift of God to man on earth is the Faith of His Roman Church.

MASS.

WE can never be sufficiently thankful to God, for His great gift to us, in the adorable Mystery of the Altar. For on the Altar in the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is present. There He is the Sacrifice for sin, and there also He is the true Food of our souls. Thus it is that the Holy Eucharist has to be considered, not only as it is a Sacrament, but also as it is a Sacrifice.

With regard to this twofold character of the Holy Eucharist, the Council of Trent speaks as follows : "There is a great difference between the Holy Eucharist, as a Sacrament and as a Sacrifice ; the Sacrament is perfected by Consecration, but all the value of the Sacrifice consists in this, that it is offered. Wherefore the Sacred Host, when it is in the pyx or when it is being carried to the sick, has the nature of a Sacrament, not of a Sacrifice." We call this

Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, the Mass: and it is of that I am going to speak now. You must never forget that it is a mortal sin to miss Mass, without a sufficient excuse, on any Sunday or other day of obligation. I will now set before you, as plainly as I can, the main doctrines about the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

But, first, you should understand the meaning of the word Sacrifice. Now Sacrifice in its most general sense is thus defined: it is the external offering of some thing, which comes within the reach of the senses, accompanied by its destruction or change: and it is made to God and only to God, by the lawful minister, in testimony to His supreme dominion over His creatures.

I. As in the old Law of Moses there were Sacrifices offered to God, so in the new Law of Jesus Christ there is a true Sacrifice. Mass is the Sacrifice of the new Law. In it, by Consecration and by the communion of the Priest, Christ is mystically slain, and is offered as a Victim to God the Father in acknowledgment of His supreme dominion. The Council of Trent speaks thus: "If any one shall say that there is not a true and proper Sacrifice offered to God

in the Mass, or shall say that the Sacrifice is nothing more than that Christ is given to us for our food ; let him be anathema."

II. The Sacrifice of the Mass contains all the characteristics of the Sacrifices of the old Law.
(1.) It is supreme worship or adoration, which can only be given to God. It is offered to Him in acknowledgment of His absolute sovereignty, that is, to show Him Divine honour. In this sense it corresponds with the holocaust or whole burnt-offering of the Jewish Law. (2.) It is a Sacrifice of thanksgiving, for it is offered to God to give Him thanks for all the blessings, natural or supernatural, which He bestows upon us. (3.) It is a Sacrifice of propitiation or expiation, since it is offered to God to obtain forgiveness of sins and the remission of punishment due to them. Thus by it satisfaction is made to the offended Majesty of God. (4.) It is impetratory, or a Sacrifice of prayer, since it is offered to God to obtain from Him, by the Merits of Christ, all blessings that we need, for those who are in this world, and for those who are suffering in Purgatory.

III. The Unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass is, in very deed and truth, the same Sacrifice that

was offered on the Cross. It is the same, not only because the same Person is offered, but also because it has the same formal nature of Sacrifice, in being offered to bear witness to God's absolute sovereignty over life and death. There is therefore no essential difference between the Sacrifice of the Altar and the Sacrifice of the Cross. The only difference that there is between them is what is called an accidental difference, and relates to the manner of offering. This difference is summed up under these three heads : (1.) On the Cross there was the real death of the Victim. Then the Human Soul of Our Lord Jesus Christ was separated from His Body. On the other hand, His death in the Sacrifice of the Altar is only mystical. (2.) Our Most Holy Redeemer offered Himself on the Altar of the Cross : but in Mass He is offered by the Ministry of His Priests. With His own Hands, as you may say, He offered Himself once on Calvary ; but, by the hands of His servants, He is always offered on the Altar. (3.) The Sacrifice of our Lord on Mount Calvary was truly and properly meritorious, for then was paid the whole price of our Redemption. But the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is not meritorious, considered in and by

itself, for in it the Merits of Christ are only applied to individual souls.

This is what the Church teaches us about Mass, that tremendous Mystery of the Altar, in which Jesus Christ is truly offered to His Father, as a Sacrifice for the living and the dead. Thus Mass is the very light and life of the Church. As the sun enlightens the world of nature, so Mass enlightens the world of souls. Its light is deep and broad, piercing, purifying, strengthening. When we hear Mass devoutly, we are lifted out of ourselves, and above the world; we seem to look upon the Throne of the Lamb slain, and to hear the melody that ever flows from the golden harps. With St Paul, that great Apostle, we seem to be caught up into the Third Heaven, hearing the words that we cannot again utter, and seeing the sights of which no tongue can tell.

I have done little more here than set down the teaching of an approved theologian: and I hope that you will be able from what has been said to understand clearly what the Mass is.

We can never therefore, as I said in the beginning, be sufficiently thankful for this great gift of God. And we cannot but feel a great

sorrow for those persons out of the Church, who have not this great blessing that has been given to us. But we ought to show this by deeds, and not only by words. We ought often to hear Mass for their conversion ; and above all we ought never to miss Mass when we are bound to hear it. And, as often as ever we can, regularly, day by day, if it be possible, we should hear Mass out of devotion. It is really dreadful to think how few people go every morning to Mass. Indevotion, carelessness, laziness, worldliness, lukewarmness, selfishness,—these are the things that keep men in their houses, when they ought to be before the Altar of God. And yet what an unspeakable blessing it is to be able to hear Mass; for the Mass is that Divine worship which can only be given to God. To offer sacrifice to any creature would be blasphemy and idolatry. But you will never know how great a blessing it is even to assist at the Sacrifice offered to God, until you see our Lord on His Throne, and drink with Him the New Wine in the Kingdom of His Father.

Be very careful, therefore, to hear Mass always when you are bound to do so. As you love God and Jesus Christ, hear it every morning,

if you can. And always hear Mass with some special intention. If you do not thus offer up to God the Masses at which you assist, you will lose many blessings and many graces.

And remember: they, who assist at Mass with right dispositions, are before the Altar, as our Lady and John and Magdalen once were beneath the Cross.

*TRANSUBSTANTIATION.**

DIVINE Wisdom has invented a way by which our Lord Jesus Christ dwells always in His Church. In one sense He is gone away from us, never to return till the Day of Judgment. He has ascended into Heaven and sits at the right Hand of His Father. His "great white Throne" is set up in the Eternal Kingdom ; and round it for evermore the redeemed Saints and elect Angels are gathered. Of this He says, "The poor ye have with you always, but Me ye have not always." We do not have Him with us always in His natural appearance, so as to be able to see Him. But in another way He has not left us: "Lo, I am with you all days until the end of the world." He is with us in the Blessed Sacrament just as truly as He was in the world in the days of His pilgrimage.

* I feel that this Reading is harder in its words than the others, but I do not know how to write of Transubstantiation in any simpler way.

Though He hides Himself, being withdrawn from our sight, yet He is always in the Blessed Sacrament, wherever it may be. There the same Throne is set up in the same eternal Kingdom ; and round it are gathered the same Angels and the same Saints.

This is a truth full of consolation and strength, Try to think what it is to have our Lord Jesus Christ always in the midst of us. Did God ever dwell in the midst of any people as He dwells in the midst of us ? In return for this we should do very little, even if we were able to bless and praise Him every moment of our lives ; even if we were always adoring Him, always loving Him, on His Altar ; even if we were always lying on our faces before His Tabernacle and His Throne.

Now the Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, has given us a word to represent and guard this mystery. That word is Transubstantiation ; a very touchstone by which you can discern the faithful from unbelievers. Some persons out of the Church profess to believe the Real Presence, but if you ask them whether they believe in Transubstantiation they will tell you they do not ; and by this you are assured at once

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that they do not believe the Truth; by this word you are able to "try the spirits, if they be of God." Thus it is very important for those who are in the Church to understand exactly and explicitly the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

I. In the Blessed Sacrament Christ is really present with His Body, Soul, and Divinity: "The Bread which I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world." "This is My Body: This is My Blood." He is present exactly in the same way under the appearance of Bread as under the appearance of Wine. And, wherever He may be, He is that self-same Christ, Who is reigning on His Throne in Heaven. There can not be two Christs, any more than there can be two Gods. The Council of Trent says: "If any one shall deny that the Body and Blood together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, Christ, whole and undivided, are contained truly, really, and substantially, in the Sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist; or on the other hand shall say that He is in it only by sign or figure or virtually; let him be anathema."

II. In the Blessed Sacrament Christ is in each Species; and in every part of each Species when

that part is separated from the rest, as long as it retains the nature of Bread or Wine. And He is thus present in the Blessed Sacrament so long as the Species of Bread or Wine remains. By the words of Consecration His Body only is brought beneath the appearance of Bread, and His Blood only beneath the appearance of Wine ; but still He Himself, in both cases undivided and one, exists beneath the Sacred Accidents. And, though He exists beneath them, He does not in any way touch them, nor do they in any way rest upon Him. The reason why our Lord exists thus in the same way under the form of Bread and under the form of Wine is because, by the force of natural concomitance, all the parts of His Body are inseparable ; for now that He has "risen from the dead He dieth no more." His Divinity also is in some special way under both Species, because of that marvellous hypostatical or personal union, by which His Soul and Body are united to the Person of the Word. Thus in all the perfection of His glorified Sacred Humanity, yet without weight and without extension, in a supernatural manner, above all laws of space, He is bodily in the Blessed Sacrament.

III. In the Holy Eucharist there is a true Transubstantiation or real conversion of the whole substance of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. So perfect is this change that after Consecration nothing of the Bread and Wine remains, except their Species ; or, in other words, the Sacred Accidents. But you must understand that nothing is changed, which can be reached by our senses. The substance of the Bread and Wine is changed, but substance is beyond our senses ; indeed we do not know what substance is. The Accidents of the Bread and Wine retain all their properties, such as colour, taste, weight, smell, or power of nutrition. And yet their substance is gone. And instead of that substance there is the Body of our Lord. This is a blessed and holy and life-giving mystery, into which the Angels desire to look ; a miracle worked daily by the Almighty power of God.

And indeed, as St Thomas teaches us, there are three great miracles in Transubstantiation. The first miracle is, that under the appearance of Bread and Wine there is the true Body of Christ. The second is, that the whole substance of the Bread and Wine is changed into our

Lord's Body. And the third is, that the Sacred Accidents remain unchanged, without their natural substance, and yet without resting in any way on the Body of Christ.

This is a most beautiful and graceful doctrine, fair and sweet as the Garden of lilies. "Behold, He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices." "My dove is in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall." "King Solomon hath made him a litter of the wood of Libanus." "Let my Beloved come into His Garden, and eat the fruit of His apple-trees." "In our gates are all fruits; the new and the old, my Beloved, I have kept for Thee." Our Lord in all the glory of His Sacred Humanity, the one Christ, the one well-beloved Son of the Father, is hidden in the Blessed Sacrament. On the other hand, there are persons out of the Church who imagine that His Body is there on the Altar, mingled in some way with the substance of bread, and His Blood also mingled in some way with the substance of wine. And nothing can be imagined more gross and carnal and revolting than such a doctrine as that. In fact they must in such a case believe in a dead Christ. This belief is dark

and horrible and false, while the Catholic belief is bright and attractive and true. Jesus is on the Altar really, truly, bodily, with His Human Body and His Human Soul, not in a natural but in a supernatural way.

Set therefore a great value on this most precious word, Transubstantiation, for it teaches you clearly the true doctrine about the abiding presence of Jesus in His Church. Wonderful and gracious, most holy and most blessed, is the Adorable Mystery of the Altar. Jesus, our Saviour, always dwells with us in the Blessed Sacrament, and always is there, the King in His Beauty.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

THE Blessed Sacrament is the Divine Presence of Jesus in His Church. It is the light and glory of the New Creation. It is the veiled Presence of Him Who, unveiled, gives life and endless joy to the countless myriads of the Redeemed, seeing Him "face to face." Though we do not have Him with us, so as to be able to see Him ; yet we have Him with us always, in reality and truth. His delight is to be with us ; and He will dwell, hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, until the end of the world.

I always wonder how it is that we have so little love for the Blessed Sacrament as we have. The same Jesus, Who is on His throne in Heaven, is also on His throne in the Blessed Sacrament. With what desire, then, should we hasten to be with Him, as often as we can : and with what love and reverence should we kneel before Him,

as He dwells in His Tabernacle. Far from us be all idle, worldly, careless thoughts, when we are in the Presence of Jesus, on His Altar; when we are standing before the great King of Heaven and earth, reigning with His many diadems through the eternal ages.

Let us try to see clearly what this great Gift is, which God has given to His people.

I. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He, Who is here called the Word, is the Eternal Son, the Second Person of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. He is the brightness of God's glory, and the figure of His Substance, being Himself God, as the Eternal Father is God. In the uttermost sense of the words, He is the Living God. He says, "I and the Father are one."

II. "The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." The First-begotten was brought into the world. A light, whose brightness cannot be told, shone in the darkness ; "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light ; to them that dwell in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen." "When the fulness of time was come, God sent

forth His Son, made of a woman." The Manhood of our Lord was personally joined to His Godhead ; so that He was not two, but one Christ. The nature of God, and the nature of man, were united in one Divine Person. Thus our Blessed Lord, God and Man, came, and lived upon earth. This is called His Incarnation. Of Himself as man He says, "The Father is greater than I :" "Just Father, the world hath not known Thee ; but I have known Thee ; and these have known that Thou hast sent Me."

III. He, Who thus came, is divinely strong, and divinely wise, and divinely good. In His goodness, He desires to give us everything that is best for us : by His wisdom, He arranges the means : and, because He is almighty, He can always do that which He desires. He is also the Creator of all things : and therefore time and space are His creatures. They are subject to the laws which He gave : but He is greater than those laws, and can suspend them, or change them, as He pleases. St Peter tells us that "one day with the Lord is as a thousand years : and a thousand years as one day." In like manner we may say, that one yard with the

Lord is as a thousand miles: and a thousand miles as one yard. No one, therefore, who has the gift of faith, can have any difficulty whatever, as to any manner of our Lord's Presence, of which we know by revelation. That one body can be in tens of thousands of places at the same time, as our Lord's Body in the Blessed Sacrament is now, and has been for nearly two thousand years, is no contradiction whatever of any law of nature of which we know; but is only a glimpse given to us of that higher law, which will one day be revealed. Only they, who are without faith, will ever mistrust His words: or will ever try to make them mean what they do not mean.

IV. No words can possibly be plainer than those which He spoke about the Blessed Sacrament: "This is My Body:" "This is My Blood." How is it possible for any one to find words which tell us more plainly and strongly, that the Blessed Sacrament is Himself? But as the Blessed Sacrament is Himself now, it must be Himself, risen and glorified: "Christ, risen again from the dead, dieth now no more: death shall no more have dominion over Him." Thus, wherever He is, He is whole and undivided. In this

Holy Mystery, therefore, He is present exactly in the same way, under the form of Bread, as under the form of Wine. And He is not present in both, so as to be two: but is always one Christ. There is indeed a difference as to the way of His coming, because of the words of consecration: but this I explained in the last Reading. Wherever He is, He is always the one Christ, the one Son of God reigning on His Heavenly Throne. His Body and Blood are hidden in the Blessed Sacrament; to them His Soul is inseparably joined, because He liveth for ever: and His Divinity is always personally united to His Soul, and therefore to His Body.

V. The same God, Who once hid His Divinity under the form of a man, now hides His Divinity and Humanity under the form of Bread and Wine. How true are the words of Isaias, "Verily Thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour." As He was carried about, when an Infant; as in His manhood He was lifted up on the Cross; so now He is, again and again, carried about in the Blessed Sacrament; so now He is, again and again, lifted up to His Throne. But it is now, as it

has always been with unbelievers ; "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?" "His look was, as it were, hidden and despised." But the true believers know of His Divine Presence, and love Him as He hides Himself in His Tabernacle. They are ever drawn to Him, as He hides Himself from the world but not from them, that they may hear in their ears the whisper of His Voice, and feel His light on their faces ; that they may touch the hem of His garment, or wash His feet with their tears. What the sun is to the world, that the Blessed Sacrament is to the Church. As a blind man cannot see the sun, so those who are spiritually blind, being without faith, cannot see this Sun of Justice in the Blessed Sacrament. "Whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him." So by the grace of God our eyes are opened : and by the light of faith, we can see Jesus, Who is hidden on His Altar. We see Him just as St John saw Him, "clothed with a garment down to the feet," and girded with a golden girdle. His Head with glory is white as snow ; and His

Eyes are a flame of fire. His Feet are like fine brass in a burning furnace; and He has seven stars in His right Hand. His Face is like the sun, shining in his power; and His voice is like the sound of many waters. And the deep-hearted Angels, sweet and majestic, are ever round Him, as He dwells upon the Altar. We cannot see them; but they are ever casting down their golden crowns before the Blessed Sacrament; ever, in multitudinous beauty, floating and throbbing round the Altar, like a great sea of fire.

With reverence, with love, with holy fear, we should always come into His Presence. Coming into Church, we can say, "The Lord is in this place." Coming before the Blessed Sacrament, we can say, "How terrible is this place: this is no other than the House of God, and the gate of Heaven." In His great love, He dwells among His people. Beautiful, and strong, and glorious, Jesus, the Word Incarnate, King of kings, and Lord of lords, hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, reigns here always on His Throne, in the eternal Kingdom, in the inaccessible Light. Beautiful, and strong, and glorious, Jesus, the Word Incarnate, King of

kings, and Lord of lords, unveiled in the splendour of the Beatific Vision, reigns there, for ever and ever and ever, on His Throne, in the eternal Kingdom, in the inaccessible Light.

FIRST COMMUNION.

DEAR CHILD, I should like very much to give you a little help in preparing for your First Communion. And therefore I wish now to tell you something about that holy and blessed Sacrament which you are going to receive so soon.

I. You know that God has made you for Himself, that you may be with Him for ever in Heaven. He has sent you into the world for one end, that is, for His love and service. You ought always to bear in mind how good God is, in thus creating you for so great an end, and in thus setting before you so great a reward. For thus God gives Himself to you as your possession; and nothing can be more blessed than this. You ought to desire God and love God above all things. It is of course altogether beyond our power to think of the blessedness of God in Himself, but it is also beyond our power

to think even of the blessedness which He gives to His creatures, when in His love He shows Himself to them for ever "as He is."

II. God, our Creator, has revealed Himself to us in the form of a Man. He has been seen by men, and has lived amongst us as one of ourselves. "The Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us." Jesus Christ lived and suffered and died for us, to save us from sin and the terrible pain of eternal death. He, our Divine Saviour, was true God and true Man. In Him were united two Natures, one Divine and one human ; but He was only One Person. And He was a Divine Person, for He is God. You have often heard of all the sufferings which this good Jesus endured for you. Perhaps you may have shed many tears, out of your love for Him, when you have thought of all His agony and pain ; when, for instance, you have read about the last night of His Passion, and His Crucifixion. No one, but God, could count the tears that have been shed over the sufferings of Jesus. You have heard how He once lay as a little Child on a cold winter night in the manger at Bethlehem ; how in swift flight He had to be carried through the desert into Egypt, that He might escape

from those who wished to kill Him ; and how He was subject to Mary and Joseph in Nazareth. You have heard of His Three Years' Ministry, of His miracles, His preaching, His parables, His sufferings, His Divine words and works. Once during that time this dear Jesus was such an outcast, such a houseless Wanderer in His Own world for your sake, that He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head." I have never been able to find anywhere more sorrowful, more pathetic words than these. In all the books that I have ever read, amongst the many very touching words that are in them, I have never found any half so sorrowful as these ; half so full of the plaintiveness of a great woe. And the very greatness of their sorrow draws you to Him Who said them. You have heard also how He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity ; how He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins ; how the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, for God laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Then you know about His Passion and Death. He suffered such a terrible agony in the Garden of

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Gethsemani that His Blood was driven through the pores of His skin and fell in great red drops upon the ground. In the piercing wind He was tied to a pillar, and scourged till His Divine Back was all torn to pieces. You can never in the least think of the agony He endured in that fearful scourging. Then He was crowned with thorns. Long thorns, sharp and hard, were platted into a crown, and that crown was set on His Head. It was a strange kind of crown (was it not?) for the world to give to God. Those long thorns, piercing and tearing His Temples, caused Him the most exquisite pain. No one can ever explain to you how great that pain was. Neither St Michael nor St John the Evangelist nor St Mary Magdalen, could tell you of it. Even our Lady herself could never find words to set before you the greatness of your Saviour's suffering, and show you how terrible it was. Then for long hours He hung in agony on His Cross, parched up with thirst, and consumed in every part of His Body with suffering, as with fire. You call to mind the Seven Sheddings of the Precious Blood, the five sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, the Five Sacred Wounds, the Fourteen Stations of the Way of Sorrows, the

last Seven Words that were spoken on the Cross. All these things are full of the most precious mysteries ; full of Divine Truth ; full of the teaching of the Holy Ghost about the sufferings of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, the Word Incarnate. Above and beyond all His bodily pain there was His mental suffering ; the suffering of His Sacred Heart, in that He was an offering for sin. This was far more than a million times greater than all that He endured in His Body. His bodily sufferings were far greater than the sufferings of all Martyrs together, but His mental sufferings were far greater than these. If our Lady could not tell us of His pain of body, still less could she tell us of His pain of soul. His Agony and Bloody Sweat and Passion and Cross are the tokens of His love. Dear Child, I want you to see and remember that Jesus endured all this for you ; endured it for you as much as if there had been no other soul to be saved but yours. Every little child can say with St Paul ; "He loved me and delivered Himself for me." But as He died for us, so for us He rose from the dead. The prison-house could not hold Him, and death could not keep Him. The victory of the grave was but

for a moment ; and the darkness fell from Him, as the mists fall from the sun, when he rises in his morning splendour. After three days, on Easter Sunday, He rose in majesty and strength and beauty. He showed Himself to Mary, to Magdalen, to Peter, to His Apostles and Disciples ; and after forty days He ascended from Mount Olivet into Heaven in His Sacred Humanity. There He sitteth at the right Hand of God : thence He shall come again at the last day to judge the living and the dead.

III. Now this same Jesus Who is in Heaven is also on earth. His delight is to be with the children of men ; and He has promised never to leave us until the end of the world. He is always really and truly with us, not only as He is God but also as He is Man. In one sense indeed He has gone away from us ; we cannot see Him and walk about with Him in the fields or in the streets, as did Mary and Joseph and John the Baptist and His holy Apostles ; as did also the Disciples who lived with Him or went to Him when He was in the world. Neither can His enemies see Him, as Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees saw Him in those days in the Holy Land. In this sense He says, “The poor ye

have always with you, but Me ye have not always." Still He is just as truly and actually with us, as Man, as He was with them. He is always in the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. There He is sitting on His glorious Throne, and all His Angels and Saints are adoring before Him. As He is in Heaven, so He is on His Altar. There is only one Christ as there is only one God. The very Body that lay in the Manger of Bethlehem, that walked on the waves of Genesareth, that was transfigured on Thabor, that hung on the Cross, that rose from the rock-hewn Sepulchre, is at this moment in the Blessed Sacrament, all over the world from the rising to the setting of the sun. As God, our Lord is everywhere. It is very little to say of God that He is everywhere; He is infinitely more than this; He is immense. I can not exactly explain this to you, for you would not understand my words: but God the Holy Ghost will explain it to you, if you pray to Him and ask Him to give you His light in your souls. As God, then, our Lord is everywhere: but, as Man, He is in every place where the Blessed Sacrament is. If there be in the world a hundred thousand places where the Blessed

Sacrament is reserved, our Lord is at this moment in every one of those hundred thousand places, as Man. So also at this moment He is on every Altar, where Mass is being said, from the time of the Words of Consecration to the time of the Communion of the Priest. And wherever His Body and Soul are, there in some special manner is His Godhead ; and there also in some special manner is the Godhead of His Father and His Spirit. Terrible therefore, and yet sweet ; holy and majestic beyond words, is the Divine Presence of Jesus on His Altar.

IV. This Jesus, God and Man, is now going to enter your soul for the first time in Holy Communion. You ought to be very happy and yet very subdued : very full of joy and yet very full of fear. It is a very fearful thing and yet a very blessed thing thus to approach the Living God. I hope and trust that in all these days of your preparation you will be scarcely able to think of any thing except Jesus and His Altar. And I know for certain that Jesus Himself will teach you far more than any one else could teach you about Himself and His love for you. You may learn much about God from books and instructions and sermons.

There are many ways by which God instructs you ; and you must never despise these ways, but must try to get all the profit from them that you can. Still Jesus Himself, Whom you are going to receive in Holy Communion, is the wisest of teachers, for He is God. The Eternal Father also and the Holy Ghost will give you much light if you pray for it. It is impossible for you to know how much light you may get by prayer, until you try. It is impossible for you to know what great things God will do for you, until you try to walk with Him, as closely as you can. The Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost will come to you, and will make their abode with you. The Father and the Holy Ghost will prepare you to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, if you ask them to do so ; for these two Divine Persons have a special and wonderful love for the Sacred Humanity of the Eternal Son. The thought of all this ought to overshadow you and fill your hearts. For you, Heaven and earth must seem to be one ; and when you enter these outer courts of the Temple you can scarcely tell whether you are before an Altar of this world or the great Altar, high and lifted up, like the Throne of

God, in the City built without hands, eternal in Heaven. You must think the time before your First Communion very long, when you call to mind the sweetness of Jesus and His great desire to draw you to Himself. But on the other hand you must think it very short, when you consider what you are and what God is; when you dwell on His intense purity and justice and holiness. It is indeed only through the Merits of Jesus and the great love of His Sacred Heart that we can venture to draw near to God. But, because of all that He has done and is doing for us, we can venture to do so with all confidence, being certain through Him to find grace to help us in every time of need. Still, when we remember that we are always "unprofitable servants," we can only cast ourselves into the arms of His mercy, and trust to that eternal love, strong and deathless, which took Him to the Cross.

I am not going to give you any directions about the prayers you should say in preparing for your First Communion. That will be done best by the Priest who is instructing you for that holy and solemn time. I only wish to tell you generally what you ought to do: to tell

you also why you should love that dear and merciful Saviour Who will so soon come to you from His Altar. By the grace of God and with His help you must try to make sure of three things : (1.) A good Preparation : (2.) A good Communion : (3.) A good Thanksgiving. For this you must be very careful to do all that your Confessor tells you to do : you must try to get all the help that you can from your Angel-Guardian and your patron Saints and our Blessed Lady : and you must pray to God very fervently and very perseveringly. If you do these things you will make a good Communion. And I think that I may say truly that your First Communion is the most solemn and important moment of your lives, except that one moment when you pass from the agony of death into the Judgment, and the presence of God.

Dear Child, you ought to be very happy now, for your loving Saviour is coming to you. And you ought also to be full of holy fear and trembling, for it is the Living God Who will so soon descend, in His Human Nature, into your heart. Be very careful in your preparation. Your Angel-Guardian is loving you very much,

and is thinking that you will have one blessing which has never been given to him. He has never received Jesus in Holy Communion. Our dear Mother Mary also is loving you very much, as you prepare yourself to receive her Divine Son. And Jesus Himself with a great love is loving you, and with a great desire is desiring to come to you. He is longing to make you His Own for ever. Go on, dear Child, preparing yourself for Him with great care. And on the morning of your Communion go up to the Altar, between your Angel-Guardian and our Lady, very reverently, very lovingly. A sunshine far brighter than all the sunshine of earth will be falling on you as you go. A love far stronger and far purer and far deeper than all love that can be found here will encircle you and overshadow you on your way. The Blessed Ones in the Heavenly City will look down on you from their thrones with great love and great joy. And Jesus will come to you. Jesus, your Saviour and your King, loving and glorious and beautiful, will enter your soul and make it His Holy City, bright and golden and pure.

Try then, as much as you can, to prepare yourself for the Coming of this Heavenly King.

Love Jesus with all your heart and strength, and make yourself ready for Him. Your prayer should be like the prayer of the whole Church for the next coming of our Lord at the end of the world. He says, "Surely I come quickly." You should answer Him, and say, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

HOLY COMMUNION.

IF it be impossible to speak worthily of the love of our Lord at all times, how much must we feel that it is impossible to speak worthily of His great love when He gives Himself to us in Holy Communion. Then in deed and in truth He unites Himself to His creation. Then in a mystery of love for which there are no words He gives us the foretaste of eternal union with Himself, and begins to celebrate that Heavenly Bridal, which one day will be changeless and endless in His Kingdom. It is not enough for Him to die mystically, day by day, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass ; it is not enough for Him to dwell day and night in the Tabernacle ; it is not enough for Him to pour out His Blood on myriads of souls in the Sacrament of Penance ; but He gives Himself bodily to us, and actually as God and Man dwells within us. Did any one ever hear of such love as this ? Where is

there a charity so inventive, so self-forgetting, so athirst for souls? He does not shrink back even from those who are defiled by mortal sin. If a man, with years of dreadful sin upon his soul, draw near to the Altar, unabsolved, impenitent, hardened, yet our most loving Jesus does not turn away from him: but in all the glory of His Godhead and Manhood descends into His soul, as into a dark and loathsome prison. Thus Jesus, bright and beautiful, does not refuse to enter the darkest heart. In Holy Communion He gives Himself to all who come.

I. Since then you receive Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, how carefully you should prepare yourself for His coming. He is the great King of Heaven and earth, and we must not go lightly or carelessly into His Presence; still less must we ever dare to receive Him lightly or carelessly into our souls in Holy Communion. The very place where He dwells is holy. All places round His Tabernacle are sacred ground. Therefore with great reverence, with great love, with holy fear, draw near to His Table. We ought to tremble in the shadow of that great Majesty before which we venture to bow down: in which we venture even to re-

ceive our Lord. At any rate the Seraphim, the Cherubim, the Thrones are trembling before His Presence on the Altar, and veiling their faces before the overpowering splendour of His Face.

II. I will set down some of the chief effects of Holy Communion, that you may think of them. I need scarcely add that a person ought to be morally certain that he is in a state of grace before he receives the Blessed Sacrament. They who receive Holy Communion in mortal sin eat and drink their own condemnation.

(1.) Holy Communion gives us an increase of sanctifying grace. Our Lord says, "My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed." As food and drink support the body, so spiritual food and spiritual drink support the soul. And, as the soul is strengthened, sanctifying grace is increased. And, as sanctifying grace is increased, you receive more strength to resist temptations.

(2.) We receive many actual graces which otherwise we should not have. And each actual grace is the pressure of a Divine Hand, the touch of a Divine Will. (3.) Bad habits are weakened and strength is given to us to overcome temptations. Thus Holy Communion is a great safeguard against future sin. Especially do we

grow in such virtues as humility, patience, and purity; in the spirit of self-sacrifice and the desire to be hidden with Christ in God. (4) Venial sins are remitted, and much also of the temporal punishment due to sin is taken away. Even mortal sins are sometimes indirectly remitted. This happens by the increase of sanctifying grace, for thus attrition may be changed into contrition. (5.) Thus also we obtain great knowledge of sin, great knowledge of self, and much spiritual discernment: for He Who is in the Blessed Sacrament is the true Light shining in the soul. (6.) We obtain an ever-increasing union with Christ, the Head, and with the members of His mystical Body. "For we being many are one bread, one Body, for we all partake of one Bread." (7.) Lastly, we obtain in some special way a Resurrection to eternal life. The Blessed Sacrament is in us as the principle of the New Creation. "He, that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day." Every one who thinks of these fruits of good Communions must surely hasten with great joy and love, and yet also with great reverence and fear, to the Table of our Lord.

III. As you prepare yourselves to approach the Altar, so with great fervour you should return thanks to God after you have received. We miss blessings without number by negligence in our thanksgivings. We are far more fervent and careful in preparing ourselves to approach the Altar than in thanking God for the Heavenly Banquet there provided for us. Alas, that it should be so. This is a terrible proof of our ingratitude. We ought to be very thankful to God for all His blessings, especially for His spiritual blessings, and most of all for Himself. Now in Holy Communion He gives Himself to us as our Possession and our Food: that in Heaven He may be our reward, exceedingly great. "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have life everlasting." And, in every day, God so loves the faithful as to give them for their food, Jesus Christ, His Son, God and Man. Can you think of a greater mystery of love than this? It is the very prelude of the eternal union between the Redeemer and His Redeemed: the very dawn of the changeless Day. He who gives Himself to us in Holy Communion is that Divine Bride-

groom of souls Who at this very moment is reigning in the midst of His Elect. Marvellous beyond all words is this gift of God in which all other gifts are contained : “ He that spared not even His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things ? ”

But remember that our Lord “ is set for the fall ” as “ for the resurrection of many in Israel.” To many indeed He is “ the odour of life unto life,” but to others He is “ the odour of death unto death.” These words are never so true as when they are applied to those who receive Him worthily or unworthily in Holy Communion. They are never so true, as when they speak of those who come unprepared to His Heavenly Feast ; or of those who even in this desert land “ walk with Him in white, because they are worthy.”

We ought therefore at all times, but especially after Holy Communion, to unite our voices to the voices of Saints and Angels in blessing and praising and thanking God. We ought then, more than ever, to try to speak to Jesus with the lips and voice of Mary : and to have in our souls the melody of the sinless Kingdom.

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Then let us remember with awe and love and veneration, Who it is that has come to us; Who it is that then for a while is actually dwelling in us. “Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.”

BENEDICTION.

THERE is something very wonderful about the inventiveness of the Church in devising means to bring souls near to Jesus. He Himself gave us the Sacraments, and they are indeed very channels of His love and grace. They are the glory of the New Creation ; and are very symbols and pledges and instruments of the love of the Holy Ghost. It seems as if our Lord did not know how to do enough to unite us to Himself. As He was once prodigal of His Precious Blood, beyond all that we could have thought of or desired, so He is now lavish of His grace, showering it on the Church with unsparing hand. In brightness and fragrance that are not of earth but of Heaven, there are ever rising round us countless signs and tokens of His love. The Church always follows the example of her Divine Spouse and walks in His steps. Patiently, lovingly, constantly, she keeps her eyes fixed on

Him ; and as He gives to her so she gives to her children. As dangers thicken, she leads us more carefully ; and, as the darkness deepens, her watchfires burn with a brighter flame.

Now Mass is the direct gift of our Lord, and • in its light the Church has rejoiced from the beginning. It has been always in the earthly City of God, that is, the Roman Church, like the sun shining in his noontide strength. Through the long years of anguish, when the Martyrs were ever going to God, it never ceased : and through still longer years, when love has been cold, its glory has never failed. But the graceful and beautiful rite of Benediction, at least as we have it now, is the gift of the Church to us in these latter days. It is only about three hundred years since the Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, instituted this service. And she did so in order that we might be brought nearer to our Lord and be more overshadowed with His light; that we might come to Him more quickly, and find Him oftener ; and be able to talk with Him on His Altar-Throne, as a man talketh with his friend.

I. Benediction is a great bulwark against the inroads of heresy. A little more than three

centuries ago, a fearful curse called the Reformation, fell on Europe and swept away like a torrent many of the ancient landmarks of the Church. Perhaps, since the day of the Ascension, there has never fallen upon the world a more fearful curse, a woe more unutterable, than this. “A great star fell from Heaven, burning as if it were a torch, and it fell on the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters : and the name of the star is called Wormwood.” “He opened the bottomless pit ; and the smoke of the pit arose as the smoke of a great furnace ; and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit.” The seamless robe of our Lord was rent, and tens of thousands of souls were torn away from the unity of His mystical Body. His Bride sat weeping and mourning in her desolation, and like Rachel could not be comforted for her children that were lost. It was then that the Holy Ghost taught her this blessed rite of Benediction. And this is the reason why I consider Benediction to be such a safeguard against heresy and heretical tendencies. They who love Benediction will be always firm in the Faith. They who do not love Benediction, who neglect it and do not care for it, are never

walking closely with God. If this were not so, the Church, being divinely guided, would not have instituted it just at the time she did.

II. The word Benediction means blessing. Our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ are always blessing us with blessings so great that we do not know how to speak of them. But special blessings are showered down upon us as we adore our Lord lifted on His Altar-Throne. In Mass He comes to us as the Sacrifice for sin, offered in the one unceasing Oblation ; but in Benediction He comes to us, that from His royal Throne, as a King, He may give us His blessing. Evermore in Benediction He looks upon us with His loving Eyes, and blesses us with His pierced Hands. We always need much help and many blessings in this dark, sorrowful pilgrimage: but where can we find them so certainly and in such abundance as in this Presence of our Lord ? And ought we not to feel this more than ever, when He comes to us for such an end. Then blessings flow on us from the Hands of our Divine Master, those Hands which now are hidden beneath the Sacred Accidents, which once were pierced on the Cross,

which now and for ever have in them the marks of the Nails.

III. Benediction has an especial gracefulness, an especial beauty, an especial attractiveness, of its own. It is most pathetic and most majestic. There is a tenderness about it, and a grandeur, which I cannot pretend to describe. In patience and long-suffering and condescension passing words our Lord is enthroned in the midst of His people. In the grandeur and majesty of His Heavenly Kingdom He reigns from His Altar. And as the Blessed see Him face to face, and adore Him amidst the Alleluias of their ceaseless worship, so we see Him by faith in the Sacred Host, and adore Him with them. They gaze upon the Word Incarnate in Heaven at the right Hand of His Father, throned amidst the everlasting burnings ; and we in the darkness gaze on those little white veils that hide Him from our sight, as He reigns in His beauty and His majesty, amidst those same everlasting burnings, in His Father's glory, on His Altar-Throne. The Lamb slain is the centre of the worship of the myriads of Saints and Angels. The same Divine Lamb in the midst of the Throne of God is the centre of the worship of His servants on earth, in every

Church where He is lifted up over His Altar that His people may adore Him and that He may give them His blessing. Here is the union of those who are in the outer Courts of the Temple with those who are within the Veil. Thus Heaven and earth are blended together and melt into one, within the majestic precincts of the Roman Church.

When we think of all this, it is very sad to know how many persons constantly and deliberately neglect Benediction. True, they are not bound to come to Benediction as to Mass, but what are we to think of those persons who do only what they are compelled to do and nothing more? This is not the spirit in which our Lord Jesus Christ lived and died. This is not the spirit of Bethlehem and Gethsemani and Calvary. If He had acted towards us as we too often act towards Him, a dark and terrible doom would have been ours for ever. They who neglect Benediction neglect the means of obtaining countless blessings, and, worse than this, they are very ungrateful to our loving Lord.

He comes, as I said, in Mass as a Sacrifice. He comes in Holy Communion as our Food.

But in Benediction He comes especially that He may bless us. In Mass He blesses us, in Holy Communion He blesses us: but Benediction is especially for this end.

I entreat all who may read these words, in the Name of Jesus, to set greater store by Benediction, if they are careless about it. Remember Who it is that is lifted up on the Throne and what He gives. Listen to His sweet Voice calling you: do not turn a deaf ear to Him: and do not be disobedient or ungrateful when you hear His words. There is, and can be, no voice like His. It is like "the sound of many waters," far sweeter than the New Song of the Redeemed. Let the flowers and the lights and the incense floating Heavenward, be symbols of the beauty and brightness and fragrance of your love. Night by night, the Son of God comes forth to you, in His white raiment, wearing His golden Crowns; night by night, His sweet Voice is heard, and He looks for you with a wistful gaze: do not turn away from such blessedness as this; do not refuse to listen to His pleading words; do not let your places be empty before the Altar when Jesus comes.

PURGATORY.

PURGATORY is that state or place, where the souls of most of those who die in a state of grace are detained for a while, before entering Heaven, that they may pay the debt of punishment which is due to the Justice of God.

When any one commits a mortal sin, that is, a sin that separates him from Divine Grace and brings him under the power of the second death, he becomes guilty in the sight of God, and makes himself liable to punishment. That punishment is twofold, eternal and temporal. When any one commits a venial sin, he displeases God, and becomes guilty, and deserves temporal punishment; though God in His Goodness does not take away Divine Grace from his soul. Here or in Purgatory, we must suffer the punishment due to us for venial sins or forgiven mortal sins. Of course by gaining Indulgences we may escape part of our punish-

ment or the whole of it ; but of this I shall not speak now.

If a soul should be lost eternally, there seems no reason why it should have had any punishment here for its sins, because all punishment is contained in that endless woe, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." But on the other hand the lost must have been rewarded here for all the good they did, if they did any ; for there can be no reward in that everlasting fire. It is not so, however, with the souls that are saved, as we know from the teaching of the Church, and also from the dealings of God with David when he sinned so grievously. David was forgiven on his repentance ; he was again justified, and so was saved from the eternal punishment that he deserved ; but still he was punished.

Thus you must distinguish clearly these three things : spiritual death or separation from God, eternal punishment, and temporal punishment. And you must also remember that sometimes on the justification of a soul God remits to it all punishment, both temporal and eternal, because of the greatness of its love and sorrow. Thus it is quite certain that St Mary Magdalen, when

she was forgiven by our Lord and brought into a state of grace, would have gone straight to Heaven, if she had died at that moment. But there is this difference between the forgiveness of sins by Baptism, and the forgiveness of sins by Absolution: Baptism takes away both the guilt and punishment of sin; but Absolution only takes away, ordinarily, the guilt of sin and its eternal punishment, leaving the temporal punishment either unchanged or only lessened.

Further, no soul can go to Purgatory, unless it depart from this world in a state of grace. If a soul depart from the body in mortal sin it goes straight to hell, being then and there, at the moment of death, condemned in the Particular Judgment. For that soul the day of grace is over; and so it is hopelessly and irrecoverably lost. There is no change in the states beyond the grave: no soul there can either come to grace or fall from it. "If the tree fall to the south or the north; in whatsoever place it shall fall, there it shall be."

But of the souls united to God by sanctifying Grace at the hour of death, all have not suffered the whole of the punishment due to them.

These go to Purgatory, for greater or less punishment, as the case may be. This shows us the inventiveness of the charity of God, how in His Divine Wisdom He makes unexpected ways for increasing the efficacy of the Precious Blood.

Now the souls in Purgatory suffer great pain, but they also enjoy great blessedness. Though their suffering is greater than all possible suffering in the world, yet their happiness also is greater than all possible happiness here. They are perfectly resigned to the Will of God, Who is always loving and gracious, and they would not in the least degree lessen their punishment if they could. They remember always the words of Jesus: "Thou shalt not go out from thence, till thou shalt repay the last farthing." And knowing that they are in the midst of His loving correction it is impossible for them even to wish anything to be otherwise than it is. Loving Jesus, as they do, it is a joy to them to know that they must stay there, as He has said.

Besides, they are confirmed in grace and are the very Brides of Christ, espoused to Him and saved. They can never leave His Side; never,

in any way, be separated from Him ; never cease following Him "whithersoever He goeth." His Divine Hand is upon them, and will be upon them for ever. His Sacred Heart is their Home, and will be their Home for ever. Neither sorrow nor temptation nor sin can touch them. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. From henceforth, now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours." Their work is over ; their salvation is secure ; their reward is fixed. The things of the world go on changing and passing away ; the darkness of the world grows thicker and thicker ; the temptations of the world become more and more terrible ; but these Souls in their glad and happy suffering are unchangeable in their love of God, unchangeable in their certainty of the Beatific Vision.

Yet, though their joy is great, their suffering also is great ; and it is of faith that we can help them by our prayers, our penances, our alms-giving, and all our other works of mercy. Most of all we can help them by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Nothing has such power with God, as "the tremendous Sacrifice ;" the "clean Oblation," offered in countless places,

day by day, on the Altars of the Church. It is the very pleading of the Passion and Cross of Jesus ; the Sacrifice, which He Himself offered two thousand years ago, on the blood-stained heights of Calvary. But it is passing strange how little these souls are remembered, even by those on whom they have claims. They are out of sight, and so too often they are out of mind. Where is our mercy ? Where is our justice ? What measure do we expect to be given to ourselves, when we come to that state of suffering ? True love is love for God and love for our neighbour : but true love for our neighbour is love of those in Heaven who help us and need no help ; and love of those on earth who are helped by us and who help us in return ; and love of the souls in Purgatory who are helped by us. And great gifts may always be obtained from the Holy Souls ; for, at any rate, if we help them now they will help us without fail when they come to the Presence of the King. This is the Communion of Saints, so often spoken of out of the Church, and so little understood.

As I said, nothing can help the souls in Purgatory so much as the Holy Sacrifice of the

Mass. It is believed that a soul does not suffer while Mass is being said for it, though all the while it is getting nearer to its entrance into Heaven, not by what it does or suffers, but simply by the power of that all-prevailing Sacrifice. St Jerome, quoted at the end of the Masses for the dead, says: "The Souls, which suffer in Purgatory, and for which the Priest prays, feel no pain, whilst Mass is being said."

If, therefore, you give many Masses to the souls in Purgatory, Mary will rejoice; and St Michael, her regent in Purgatory, will rejoice also; because they know how Jesus is longing to bring these souls to Himself.

I fear that many souls would wait long for help, if it were not for the Masses said for them by Priests out of their own devotion. A voiceless and most plaintive cry for help is always coming to us from Purgatory: are we not hard-hearted and merciless, if we are deaf to that cry, and refuse the help that we can give to these suffering Souls?

Let me entreat you to give many Masses absolutely to our Lady, that she may dispense them to the Holy Souls, according to their need.

INDULGENCES.

AN Indulgence is the forgiveness of the whole or part of the temporal penalty due for sin. In the case of venial sins or forgiven mortal sins there remains some punishment which we must suffer either here or in Purgatory, unless that punishment be taken away by the greatness of our sorrow. But, even when it remains, there is a way by which we may escape it; and that is by Indulgences. I want to explain to you, as simply as I can, what is meant by this word.

I. I may begin by saying that it is of faith that the Church can grant Indulgences. Our Lord gave His Church full power to bind and loose, not only outwardly in matters of discipline, but also inwardly in matters of conscience: for He said to Peter, and in Him to the Church: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."

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Universal Tradition and the constant practice of the Church teach us the same thing. And the Council of Trent says, "If any say that Indulgences are useless, or deny to the Church the power of granting them; let them be anathema."

An Indulgence, then, is the remission of temporal punishment due to God for sins forgiven as to their guilt. It is granted by the lawful minister, out of the Sacrament of Penance, by the application of the treasure of the Church. That treasure is the Satisfaction which our Lord Jesus Christ has made for sin. With this treasure, in His great love for His mystical Body, He associates the merits of our Lady and the Saints; not of course as of any necessity, but solely out of His Own goodness, because He desires to unite His creatures with Himself in His great work. It shows us how kind and merciful and gracious and bountiful He is, when we remember that all these merits of His creatures are His own gifts.

An Indulgence is plenary or partial, according as the whole or part of the temporal punishment is taken away. Sometimes an Indulgence is personal, that is, granted directly to persons,

as to members of Confraternities ; sometimes it is local, as when it is annexed to a particular place, as a Church or Altar ; and sometimes it is real, as when it is annexed to an Image, a Crucifix, a Rosary, or other objects of devotion.

II. There are four conditions required in order that a person may gain an Indulgence. (1.) He must be baptized, since the treasure of the Church cannot be dispensed to unbelievers; and he must be free from sentence of excommunication, for otherwise he would be cut off from all share in spiritual goods. (2.) He must be the subject of the person granting the Indulgence. Each Bishop, with certain restrictions, can grant Indulgences in his own diocese ; but the Holy Father alone can make them applicable to all the faithful, for the Holy Father alone, like our Lord's Apostles, has a universal jurisdiction. (3.) The prescribed works must be fulfilled in the prescribed time, for the Indulgence is granted on this condition. (4.) He must be in a state of grace, at least when he does the last prescribed work ; for punishment is not remitted, unless the guilt be taken away. No one, whilst he remains in mortal sin, away from God, can possibly gain an Indulgence, or derive any benefit

from it. Only those who are united to God by sanctifying grace can gain the blessings which the Church offers them in this way. St Alfonso says that, even when we are striving to gain Indulgences for the Holy Souls, and not for ourselves, the safer opinion teaches that we must, if we are to gain the Indulgence, be in a state of grace, at least at the time when the last prescribed condition is fulfilled by us.

III. It is better to try to gain plenary than partial Indulgences : for if we fail in gaining the Indulgence as offered, yet we gain a part of it proportioned to our dispositions. For, as Gury says, the Holy Father in granting a plenary Indulgence is not supposed to wish to restrict its benefits to those who have been forgiven all their venial sins, but rather he is justly thought to grant it according to the capability of the person who seeks to gain it, so that at least all punishment may be remitted, which can be remitted. He adds that the opposite opinion, that you must gain a plenary Indulgence altogether or not at all, is not even probable. For if it were, it would follow that partial Indulgences would be more beneficial than those that are plenary, because the faithful would be

able to derive greater benefits from them. But you should be careful to remember that, according to the far more probable opinion, an affection to any venial sin will hinder you from gaining a plenary Indulgence.

I must now tell you what is understood by an Indulgence of so many days or years. By an Indulgence of 100 days, for instance, we understand the remission of the same amount of punishment as would have been remitted by the Canonical penances of the early Church, strictly performed for that time. But what value those Canonical penances had in the sight of God, and what value our penances have in His sight, we do not know in the least; because we do not know the proportion between our sufferings and the punishment which God inflicts for sin.

You must always be very careful to do everything that is prescribed for gaining an Indulgence, for otherwise by neglect you may easily lose it. You will thus lose an Indulgence if you miss much of the prescribed work; but not so if you only miss a very small part of it. Thus you would not lose an Indulgence by missing one Our Father and one Hail Mary out of the Rosary: but you would certainly lose it if you missed five

Our Fathers and five Hail Marys. All that I have said here is nearly in the words of Gury; on this subject I thought it would be best to give you the teaching of an approved theologian.

IV. Do not forget that you can apply many Indulgences to the Souls in Purgatory. Under certain conditions you can apply all. And no better work can you ever do, than giving all the help that you can to the Holy Souls. There are thousands and tens of thousands in the Church, who have made what is called the Heroic Act, and who have given up every Indulgence, partial or plenary, which they may ever gain in their lives, to the Souls in Purgatory. I am certain that God will most abundantly bless all who have done this; and with all my heart do I pray for graces and blessings on those who thus are helping the Holy Souls, and following in the self-sacrificing steps of our Divine Master, Jesus Christ. The Church has no direct jurisdiction in Purgatory, but she helps the Souls detained there, by way of suffrage, that is, prayer. But that one Soul or many Souls in Purgatory may be benefited by an Indulgence, you must have the intention of so applying it. The best use, however, that you can make of Indulgences is to

put them in the hands of Our Lady, even if you have made the Heroic Act, that she may apply them to the Holy Souls, as she pleases.

There is much more that might be said on this subject, so full of the mercy and loving-kindness of God. But when you wish to know about any particular Indulgence you can easily ask some Priest, who will explain the matter to you.

They, who gain a plenary Indulgence when they are dying, go straight to Heaven, whatever they may have done. However great and however terrible the sins of any man may have been, prolonged through years, heaped up in intense-ness, if only he can gain a plenary Indulgence when he is dying, he will go straight to Heaven. But I do not say that it is easy to do this. Still very great is the watchful care of our holy Mother the Church. In the agony of death you can gain a plenary Indulgence, if you have the right dispositions, merely by saying those sweet Names, Jesus and Mary. And, if you are unable to say them with your lips, you need only say them in your hearts.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

THE Holy Ghost inspired St Paul to say : “ We being many are one body in Christ ; and every one members one of another.” This is, as it were, a great charter of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints.

I. There is the Church of God in this world. We are in the midst of Babylon, in the outer darkness of the City of confusion, but a Divine Hand guides us ; and a Divine Light is round us. The Church is set up amongst men, to teach the world, and to rule the world. But the powers of evil are strong ; and this is the hour of the prince of darkness. The Divine Order is broken ; the Divine Will is resisted ; the Divine beauty and symmetry of the outward accidents of the City of God are dimmed, and marred, and disfigured. Still the Church is always faithful to her Divine Head ; and the gleaning of the harvest never ceases, and the vintage

does not fail. The elect are ever being signed with the sign of the Son of God ; ever being clothed in white ; ever being taken to the golden City. Jesus walks in the midst of us ; and the fire touches Him not. He speaks and we listen ; He leads us and we follow. He says, " My sheep hear My voice ; and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever ; and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all ; and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and My Father are One." And the prophet Malachi describes God's care of His servants : " They that feared the Lord spake every one with his neighbour ; and the Lord gave ear and heard it ; and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that fear the Lord, and think upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day that I do judgment." Thus God is with us, pouring His grace into our hearts, giving us strength to do His will, and keeping us from the evil. His Church here is His Church in warfare, ever fighting the good fight of faith, and ever going

on victoriously to the end. He listens to us and rejoices over us, as our prayers go up, like incense, to His Presence. It is by prayer, by the prayer of our lips, and by the voiceless prayer of our hearts, that we cling round the Feet of God.

II. The suffering Church of God is in Purgatory. There the great work of souls is to suffer. They merit no more; they labour no more; the day of grace has passed; and the night has come to them in which they cannot work. Grace is not given to them as it is given to us; for with increase of grace would come increase of merit: and we know that the merit of every soul is fixed at the moment of death; and never can be increased, never can be diminished, to all eternity. They are not being purified in the sense of being brought nearer to God by increase of sanctifying grace; but they are being purified in the sense of being brought nearer to God, by payment of the debt of punishment which they owe to His loving justice. Inexpressible consolation is ever being given to them. The Divine Hand of Jesus is ever thrilling them with joy; the tender hand of Mary is ever lifting them towards God.

“ White robes were given to every one of them ; and it was said to them that they should rest yet for a little time.”

Beautiful in their helplessness, these Holy Souls appeal always to our pity with a voice most sweet and most pathetic. In the dim loveliness of that Court of the Palace of God you can see them resplendent in their suffering and their joy, in the greatness of their rapture and the greatness of their pain. The silent shadows are flitting over them ; and the rain of help is falling upon them. Prayers are being said for them all over the world, without ceasing ; penances and Indulgences are being given up to them ; the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is being offered for them. Mary and Michael rejoice over them as the streams of the Precious Blood flow down from the Altars of the Church. They are ever looking up—ever lifting up their heads, in the great redemption that is drawing nigh.

III. Above the firmament is a Throne, like a sapphire; a fire infolding a cloud, and brightness are about it ; out of the fire comes a blaze of amber ; the four living creatures, like burning coals of fire, are there ; over them is a brightness

like "the appearance of the rainbow, when it is in a cloud on a rainy day;" there is "the noise of many waters, as it were the voice of the most High God;" and on the Throne is sitting a Divine Man, Who once was crucified, but Who now liveth and reigneth in His Kingdom for ever. Daniel speaks of His glory thus: "I beheld till thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days sat: His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His Head like clean wool; His Throne was like flames of fire; the wheels of it like a burning fire. A swift stream of fire issued forth from before Him; thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him." "One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven; and He came even to the Ancient of days, and they presented Him before Him. And He gave Him power, and glory, and a kingdom; and all peoples, tribes, and tongues, shall serve Him; His power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away; and His Kingdom an everlasting Kingdom that shall not be destroyed." Thus Jesus, God and Man, with Face unveiled, reigns in the Kingdom of His glory. Over the whole of that radiant

Kingdom flows the splendour from His golden sceptre : downward that splendour pours to the silent sea of Purgatory, most sorrowful, most beautiful ; downward, still further, to this Egyptian darkness, and this house of bondage, where the net of the fowler is ever spread, and where the snares of the destroyer of souls stand before us, both in the sunshine and the night. Upon these kingdoms, that is, upon earth and Purgatory, our Lord looks down as He reigns in the midst of His triumphant Church.

Thus Jesus reigns. At His side is the throne of Mary. There she reigns with Him over all the kingdoms that own His sovereignty. For wherever He is King, there Mary is Queen. Her silver sceptre in its lustrous beauty irradiates the City of the Saints, and the Temple of God. She is at His side for evermore, crowned with her diadem of twelve Stars, the sweetest and most beautiful diadem that the Creator has ever put upon the brows of a creature ; and clothed with the glory of the sun, in the most gleaming robe that has ever been given to any of those whom the King delighteth to honour.

The seven great Angelic Princes are there, and all the Nine Choirs of the Angels. Before

the Thrones of Jesus and Mary, the Dominations, and Seraphim, and Cherubim, and Thrones, in their throbbing stillness, bow down. The countless gathering of the Redeemed is there with white robes, and palms, and crowns of gold. There too are the Elect of the elect, the hundred and forty and four thousand, that "follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth." And from all of these there goes up to God, like a stream of incense, the great voice of a ceaseless prayer. St Michael offers that great stream of prayer to God. He "stood before the Altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar, which is before the Throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the Saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the Angel."



The interchange of love and sympathy and prayers and help, amongst these three kingdoms of Jesus, is the Communion of Saints. The bending down of the Angels and the victorious Redeemed towards us, in the days of our warfare, towards the Holy Souls, so tranquil, so patient, so joyful, in the midst of their pain, is the Com-

munion of Saints. The signing and sealing of all of us with the Precious Blood, the subjection of all of us in mind and in heart to the Sovereignty of God, is the Communion of Saints. In Heaven with its golden Palaces, and in Purgatory with its silent suffering, and on earth, in darkness and sorrow and anguish and desolation and temptation and sin, and yet in the light of the Roman Church, the City of God manifested here, we are all members of the great brotherhood of the Elect, and are all one in Jesus, our God. This is the Communion of Saints, to be one day perfected in Heaven ; when the warfare of the Church shall be over for evermore, and the suffering of the Church shall for evermore be finished. Nothing remains there but the great Sabbath of Eternity, the rest through the eternal ages. All are one there for ever and ever, in the Communion of Saints that never can be broken, in the light of God, in the splendour of the Beatific Vision.

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OUR LORD'S COMING.

THE great work of the Church is to prepare herself for the Coming of her Lord. He has withdrawn Himself for a little while; He has hidden Himself from our longing gaze; He has gone up into Heaven, into "the inaccessible light," and has, on earth, veiled Himself beneath the Accidents of the Blessed Sacrament. But He will soon come back again: "A little while and now you shall not see Me; and again a little while and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father."

The sign of the Son of Man will be seen in Heaven; the sound of His great Archangel's trumpet will be heard; the gleaming choirs of the Angels will be gathered round Him; and He will come back in the Divine splendour of His Kingdom and Glory to that sacred Mount of Olives from which He rose in the day of His Ascension. On that Mount of Olives, by

Jerusalem, in the Holy Land, there are at this moment, if we could see them, the two footprints where last He stood, just before Mary and the Eleven saw Him rise to the cloud that received Him from their sight, when He passed, victorious and crowned, anointed and sceptred, in the glory of His triumph and the majesty of His Kingdom, to His Throne before the Ancient of days.

To that venerable hill, consecrated by the Blood of His Agony, He will return in the great day of Judgment ; and all the countless multitudes of men will be gathered into His Presence. They will be assembled before Him by the Almighty Power of God, in the Valley of Josaphat. So speaks the prophet Joel: " For behold in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring back the captivity of Juda and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the Valley of Josaphat ; and I will plead with them there for My people and My inheritance Israel." " Let them arise, and let the nations come up into the Valley of Josaphat ; for there I will sit to judge all nations round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe."

No one will know when He is coming, for He

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will come when least expected. "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet Him." In the dark midnight of indifference, coldness, slothfulness, when men are at the height of their ingratitude, and at the height of their worldliness, that piercing cry will strike terror into their souls. Our Lord says Himself, " Watch ye, therefore, because ye know not the day nor the hour."

Nothing is more certain than that Jesus will not be expected in the day of His Appearing : "As in the days of Noe, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day in which Noe entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came and took them all away ; so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be." "As lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even unto the west, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be."

Then all that have lived from Adam till that time shall stand before Him, and look upon Him ; "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him ; and they also that pierced Him."

This is the great gathering of the general Judgment. "When the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the Seat of His Majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before Him; and He shall separate them one from another as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left."

What a fearful separation this is: what a terrible weighing and judging is this last Judgment of all. Try to bring it clearly before your minds as if you were there looking on, and pray to the Holy Ghost to enlighten your souls, so that you may know the full meaning of His words.

Then Jesus, sitting there in His Mercy and His Justice, destroys the sinners for ever "with one rough word." He says to the despisers of His grace, to those who are then lost for ever, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." These are terrible words to write, terrible words to read; they will be more terrible to hear.

To His servants He says, "Come ye blessed of My Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To each He says, "Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." These are blessed words to write, blessed words to read; they will be still more blessed to hear.

If you understand this, wait daily for His coming, and pray for it, for this is according to the Spirit of God: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." You cannot tell when He may come, therefore wait ceaselessly for Him. No one can say for certain that He will not come to-day, or to-night, or to-morrow. It is just as likely that He may come, as that He may not. He says, "I am the root and stock of David, and the bright and morning Star." "Surely I come quickly." That is His warning to all who read this book, and to the whole Church of God.

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